

COLOMBIAN ARTISTS IN PARIS, 1865-1905

by

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation brings together a group of artists not previously studied collectively, within the broader context of both Colombian and Latin American artists in Paris. Taking into account their conditions of travel, as well as the precarious political and economic situation of Colombia at the turn of the twentieth century, this investigation exposes the ways in which government, politics and religion influenced the stylistic and thematic choices made by these artists abroad. For those who were pensioned artists and who were restricted by a defined political agenda, their artistic experimentation was limited, while the more radical artists were typically wealthy and independent. Regardless of the circumstances, Colombian artists were burdened by their country's minimal and ineffective presence overseas, which resulted in a complete misunderstanding of their culture abroad and in a lack of presence at major universal expositions.

In focusing on their role as artists, educators and art critics, this dissertation reveals the important contributions that these travelers made to Colombian art as a result of their overseas travel. As revealed in the art criticism of the period, the work of these artists and their progressive philosophies on art were received with skepticism in Colombia, a country that until then had remained largely hermetic and which traditionally had been very conservative. These artists, who established the tradition of traveling to Paris and who challenged the insularity of Colombian art, ensured the eventual birth of modernism.

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- Figure 84: Eduardo Schiaffino, *After the Bath*, 1888. Source: Laura Malosetti, *Los primeros modernos: Arte y sociedad en Buenos Aires a fines del siglo XIX* (Mexico: El Fondo de Cultura Económica de México, 2001), 227.
- Figure 85: Francisco A. Cano, *The Secretary of the School of Fine Arts*, 1929, oil on canvas, 31.9 x 20.7 in. (81 x 52.5 cm.), Museo Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá. Source: Olga Acosta Luna, "El secretario de la Escuela de Bellas Artes," *Cuadernos de Curaduría* 7 (July 2008): 1.

Figure 86: Luis Alberto Acuña, Detail of Mural, 1973, at the Museo de Artes Gráficas de la Imprenta Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá. Source: <http://juliomanrique.com/abuelos/abuelos.html>, accessed on April 19, 2009.

Figure 87: Francisco A. Cano, *Copy of Charles Chaplin (1825-1891)*, 1900, oil on canvas, 27.2 x 18.9 in. (69 x 48 cm.), Private Collection. Source: Escobar Villegas, ed., *Francisco Antonio Cano 1865-1935*, 114-115.

Introduction

This study of Colombian artists in Paris touches upon a series of topics that extend across cultures and time periods. Focusing on the state of Colombian art at the turn of the century and in comparison to that of other Latin American countries, as well as on the attraction foreign artists felt toward Paris and their experiences while abroad, this dissertation contributes to the study of Colombian nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, as well as to ongoing discussions about transatlantic dialogues between Europe and the Americas. In providing a strong socio-historical framework that reflects how Colombian artists negotiated the varying currents of modernism and tradition, I do not propose a rewriting of nineteenth-century Colombian art, but rather, a reexamination and an expansion of our understanding of Colombian art at the turn of the century. This

reexamination seeks to establish the important role that nineteenth-century Colombian artists played as precursors to modernism, as well as to enhance our understanding of their broader accomplishments.

Although the history of Colombian art production encompasses more than 3,500 years,¹ the “official” history of Colombian art began in 1886, with the establishment of the Republic of Colombia and the foundation of its first art academy, the Escuela de Bellas Artes. National consolidation and artistic institutionalization coincided in the nineteenth century, and thenceforth they continued to relate to one another. As in most Latin American countries, the early development of Colombia’s art academy largely depended on government support, since the State determined how many scholarships were awarded to its artists, which professors joined the faculty, and which classes were taught. The government, like the Church, set the parameters of morality and instruction, and as a result, early Colombian art was related to and, in some ways, dependent upon the State.

Like most Latin American nations that had gained independence in the nineteenth century, Colombia was searching, throughout most of the century, for political stability and consolidation. Crippled by the volatility of its post-independence era, it played a minimal role in the international arena. Religious conservatism, the centralized government of the Regeneración (1886-1898), and the violence and economic turmoil of the Thousand Days War (1899-1902) were among the most significant factors in Colombia’s instability in the aftermath of independence. While many Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Peru, began to display their cultural patrimony at universal

¹ Santiago Londoño Vélez, *Arte colombiano: 3,500 años* (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 2003).

expositions beginning in 1855, Colombia rarely participated in these exhibitions. Conflicts between liberal and conservative political factions dominated in the late nineteenth century, resulting in the marginalization of Colombian arts while larger national issues took center stage. Despite limited government support and minimal international exposure, however, Colombian artists managed, sometimes under extraordinary circumstances, to travel abroad--either on government scholarships or by their own financial means--in order to obtain coveted artistic training.

Although some Colombian artists visited art centers like Rome, Madrid, and New York, Paris was typically the preferred destination, despite its bohemian and scandalous reputation and the artists' predominant Catholicism.² Some Colombian artists received government scholarships that enabled them to make the trip abroad, while others were self-funded. The former group usually returned to Colombia to advance their country's arts and elevate its stature among developed nations while the latter group exhibited no particular loyalty to Colombia, and often settled abroad in Paris permanently. Whatever their motives, these Colombian artists, including both travelers and expatriates, were influential in the development of Colombian art, in large part due to their travels to Paris.

The period of this first generation of Colombian artists returning from artistic pilgrimages to Paris marks the transition from colonial to modern art. Among other contributions, these artists helped establish Colombia's first art academy and curricula. Scholars have simplified or misunderstood this transitional period, such as seen in Beatriz González's classification of this era as Neoclassical or Academic.³ I argue, however, that

² Carlos Holguín, for example, commented on the immorality of Paris by citing its high number of suicides and immigrants and its liberal political inclinations, in "Revista de Europa," *El Repertorio colombiano* 7 (July - December 1881).

³ Beatriz González, *El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 2004).

this era of Colombia's art history was complex and heterogeneous. Although the Colombian Academy, like others in Latin America, was based on Classical models, the institution and its pupils were not immune to political changes taking place around them or to the wide array of European influences that permeated their country. Colombian art at this time, then, looked to the past as much as it anticipated the future.

In order to have a richer understanding of this artistic complexity, I explore in this dissertation the lives and artistic development of five representative, yet often overlooked, artists: Alberto Urdaneta (1845-1887), Epifanio Garay (1849-1903), Andrés de Santa María (1860-1945), Francisco A. Cano (1865-1935), and Ricardo Acevedo Bernal (1867-1930). All five traveled abroad and had a profound effect on the development of Colombian art in their roles as educators, innovators, and critics.⁴ Each also established a significant break from the previous insularity of Colombian art, introducing European ideas and trends to students and fellow artists and ultimately paving a path towards modernism.

Contributions and Review of the Literature

Most of the scholarly attention on Latin American art has, until recently, focused on twentieth-century modernist movements such as Social Realism, Muralism, Surrealism, and Geometric-Abstraction. Curators Luis Pérez-Oramas and Mari Carmen Ramírez, for example, have increased the visibility of Latin American art, especially

⁴ Due to the limited literature on the subject, the selection of these five artists was also based on access to archival materials and primary sources.

within the United States, but this twentieth-century focus has created a dearth of scholarly attention on the nineteenth century.⁵

The few works that include the nineteenth century are comprehensive treatments of Latin American art and, as such, their analyses lack depth and detail. Written in 1966, Stanton Loomis Catlin's *Art in Latin America since Independence* was one of the first publications to examine the as-yet-unexplored period of art produced in Latin America immediately after independence and during the early years of arts academies.⁶ In 1989, Dawn Ades's *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980* also addressed aspects of late nineteenth-century Latin American art that previously had remained unexamined by historians, such as the influence of traveling U.S. and European artists on Latin American landscapes, and art academies' promotion of national styles of painting.⁷ As exhibition catalogues, *Art in Latin America since Independence* and *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980*, introduced a North American and European audience to this foreign period of art production, but the time is ripe to delve deeper. By more narrowly addressing the subject, through this country-specific approach, and by only focusing on the artists' Parisian experiences, this investigation highlights aspects of Latin American art produced after independence and before modernism.

⁵Although Luis Pérez-Oramas has published on the late –nineteenth-century Venezuelan artist, Arturo Michelena (1863-1898), in *Genio y gloria de Arturo Michelena: 1863-1898 en el centenario de su muerte* (Caracas: Fundación Galería de Arte Nacional, 1998), his published work focuses mainly on twentieth-century artists such as Armando Reverón (1889-1954), Gego (1912-1994), León Ferrari (b. 1920) and Mira Schendel (1919-1988). Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea, *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

⁶ Stanton Loomis Catlin, *Art of Latin America Since Independence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

⁷ Dawn Ades, ed., *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820- 1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

Texts on Colombian modern art, specifically, typically take into account art produced since 1886, the year of the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, overlooking work produced between 1819, the year of independence, and 1886.⁸ Other survey texts, that address the entire history of Colombian art, tend to present Urdaneta, Garay, Acevedo Bernal, and Cano as predecessors of Santa María, when in fact all were contemporaries and should be discussed as such.⁹ I suggest a regrouping and reexamination of these artists: Urdaneta and Garay--born during the 1840s—and Santa María, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal--born during the 1860s--should be considered part of the same generation, since they shared similar cultural approaches and attitudes towards art and art education.

Since Urdaneta was one of the earliest Colombian artists to travel to Paris and was the sole founder of the first art academy, the history of Colombian art naturally begins with him. Garay, defined as the Academic artist *par excellence*, was an inspiration to Cano, and later a competitor of Acevedo Bernal. Santa María, the most celebrated Colombian Impressionist artist of the nineteenth century, is typically labeled as the first Colombian modernist, although he was raised in London and Paris. His fame has overshadowed Acevedo Bernal's importance as a Proto-Impressionist painter who, despite his contribution, does not even have an authoritative monograph.

Another reason that some of the artists of this study have traditionally been overlooked is their involvement in political activities. Urdaneta's prominent role as the founder of the first art academy and his important contributions to the illustrated press,

⁸ See, for example, Eduardo Serrano, in *Cien años de arte colombiano* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1985). In this work, he examines art produced in Colombia between 1886 and 1986, demonstrating the extent to which art produced before 1886 is rarely discussed.

⁹ Londoño Vélez; and J. G. Cobo Borda and Santiago Mutis Durán, eds., *Manual de historia de Colombia*, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1979-1982).

for example, have been downplayed because of the political activism that led to his exile to Paris in 1877. Whereas Urdaneta's work took an open stand against Colombia's liberal politics, Acevedo Bernal's creations were politically neutral; yet this did not deter liberal critics from positioning him on their side of the political spectrum citing imagery from his compositions.

Another separation in the treatment of these artists happens along geographical lines. Since Cano was from Medellín, part of the region of Antioquia, he tends to be separated from the other painters, who mainly lived in Bogotá, in the region of Cundinamarca (Fig. 1).¹⁰ While Bogotá is its longtime political capital, the city of Medellín emerged during the nineteenth century as Colombia's financial and industrial hub—creating a rivalry that continues to this day.¹¹ In grouping Acevedo Bernal and Urdaneta together with the more established Garay, Cano, and Santa María, I approach the birth of Colombian art in all its diversity.

Until the 1950s Colombian art historical scholarship mainly consisted of biographical and formalist accounts, offering little critical analysis or conceptual frameworks from which to understand the history of art. In the 1960s, Marta Traba, the first academically trained critic of Colombian art, changed the course of this scholarship with her radical views on art and politics.¹² Traba not only introduced leftist ideas to Colombian art history, but also established the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá in

¹⁰ Santiago Londoño Vélez, *Historia de la pintura y el grabado en Antioquia* (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 1996) is an example of how publications in Colombia can be limited by geography.

¹¹ Marcos Palacio and Frank Safford in *Colombia: país fragmentado, sociedad dividida* (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2002), 15-36, demonstrate how the geographical, cultural, economic, political, and ethnic differences among these regions account for Colombia's lack of unity.

¹² Marta Traba, *Historia abierta del arte colombiano* (Cali: La Tertulia, 1974; reprint, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1984).

1955. In the 1960s, Traba supported the work of a promising young painter, Beatriz González, who today is both an established artist and an important curator and art critic. Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo's *La miniatura, la pintura y el grabado en Colombia* (1982) and Alvaro Medina's *Procesos del arte en Colombia* (1977) have also offered important reevaluations of Colombian art.¹³ Other influential scholars, such as Patricia Londoño, Santiago Londoño Vélez, Juan Camilo Escobar Villegas, and Eduardo Serrano have moved beyond monographs and pursued more extensive and argumentative observations based on social history, feminist studies, and revisionism.¹⁴

Building on this type of Colombian scholarship, and following in the footsteps of Albert Boime's revisionist approach to French Academic painting, I argue for the variety and progressiveness of what has been defined as Colombian "Academic" painting.¹⁵ I eliminate here the traditionalist label of "Academic," under which Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal have been pigeonholed and, as a result marginalized, in the history of Colombian modern art. While scholars of Colombian art have typically focused on the commissioned works of these artists, I consider their entire corpus, including the paintings and drawings that they did among and for friends, as well as in their journals, demonstrating their varying degrees of change; since often, transformations in style and

¹³ Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo, *La miniatura, la pintura y el grabado en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1980); and Alvaro Medina, *Procesos del arte en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1978).

¹⁴ Patricia Londoño has published on issues of femininity and the feminine ideal in the nineteenth century in "Publicaciones periódicas dirigidas a la mujer en Colombia, 1858-1930," in *Las mujeres en la historia de Colombia*, ed. Magdala Velásquez Toro (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 1995); Eduardo Serrano, in *Andrés de Santa María: pintor colombiano de resonancia universal* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1988), has argued for a reevaluation of Andrés Santa María as not only an Impressionist painter but as a colorist whose styles also included Expressionism; and Juan Camilo Escobar, in *Francisco Antonio Cano 1865-1935* (Medellín: Museo de Antioquia, 2003), has published the most comprehensive text to date on Francisco A. Cano, compiled from archival, primary, and secondary sources.

¹⁵ Albert Boime, *The Academy of French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Phaidon, 1971).

content were not always radical, but rather subtle. Most importantly, I demonstrate how Paris served as a turning point in their careers, providing a discussion on how their educational, social, and exhibition experiences abroad changed their art production and views on art.

Although Colombian scholarship has properly noted the artistic pilgrimages of these artists to Europe and the United States, they have generally done so in a selective and limited way, offering little explanation about these artists' academic and exhibition experiences, and at times failing to provide information about their studio enrollment. Through research I conducted at the Archives of the Académie Julian, located at the Archives nationales in Paris, I was able to confirm the registration of most of these artists, detailing their dates of attendance and the classes in which they enrolled. Additionally, I examined their own writings as well as correspondence with family and friends while abroad and compared them to their art production before and after Paris. I scrutinized the irregularities in their artistic production and the varying degrees to which they emulated European stylistic and thematic models. In so doing, I reveal how these artists were highly receptive to French aesthetics, both Academic and otherwise.

In analyzing the influences that Colombian painters absorbed abroad, and in juxtaposing the criticism they received in Paris to that in Bogotá, I reveal the cultural tensions that affected what they produced and exhibited. In Bogotá, for example, the artists in this study limited themselves to painting portraits or religious scenes, while in Paris they were inspired by the nude, which they sketched daily, as well as surrounded by a bustling avant-garde art scene and strong French cultural heritage. Acevedo Bernal, when speaking of this liberating Parisian experience, described it as his opportunity to contemplate “the works of the immortals... [but also discover] modernism, futurism,

cubism, impressionism.”¹⁶ For artists who absorbed such modern styles as Impressionism, their acceptance in Bogotá was highly problematic as their intentions were often misinterpreted as a reflection of leftist political ideologies. Within a Parisian context, however, their work rarely caused a stir.

The history of Colombian art cannot be understood without focusing on its art academy, an institution to which all five artists belonged as both professors and directors. An important space of cultural contact for critics, artists, and students, the Academy was integral to the development of Colombian art and to the acceptance of Impressionism. Alvaro Medina has interpreted this acceptance as the earliest indication of anti-Academic attitudes at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, due in large part to Santa María’s directorship, but also brought about by the rise of industrialization in the country.¹⁷ Reflecting the close connections between the Academy and its students, and between the Academy and the government, it is clear that the Escuela de Bellas Artes, in response to external political and economic factors, played an influential role in developing the arts and in introducing and cultivating progressive attitudes.

The Escuela de Bellas Artes not only professionalized artists, but also established the first regular and official fine art exhibitions in the country, which in turn, gave way to the birth of art criticism. Still in existence today, the Academy has engaged Colombian scholars, who have published on its history, professors, and exhibitions in modest

¹⁶ “las obras de los inmortales ... el modernismo, futurismo, cubismo, impresionismo.” Samuel Velásquez Botero, “Entrevistas de *El Gráfico*: con Acevedo Bernal,” *El Gráfico* 23, no. 226 (March 13, 1915): 610. All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁷ Alvaro Medina, *Procesos del arte en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1978), 80.

publications such as *Presencia de los maestros* and *147 Maestros*.¹⁸ That the five artists examined in this study participated in the evolution of Colombian art and helped implement unprecedented changes in the institution's curriculum and exhibition practices is confirmed by an examination of the archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá.

Finally, this investigation contributes to a larger and more international dialogue of artists across the world who studied and lived in Paris, as discussed by a number of scholars. Robert Rosenblum's *Paris 1900: Art at the Crossroads* (2000), for example examined the internationalism and artistic crosscurrents of Paris at the turn of the century. Since North American artists formed the largest colony of foreigners in Paris, their presence has been explored at greater length and in numerous publications. H. Barbara Weinberg and Lois Marie Fink, among others, have examined the presence of North American artists in this famed city, focusing primarily on their education and exhibition history.¹⁹ Most recently, the 2006 exhibition "Americans in Paris, 1860–1900," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, demonstrated a growing interest in cultural exchange and the importance of North American artists within this dialogue.

In Latin America, Peruvian scholar Natalia Majluf and Argentinean scholar Laura Malosetti Costa have been the first academics in their respective countries to examine

¹⁸ Marta Fajardo de Rueda, *Presencia de los maestros, 1886-1960* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1986); and David Lozano, *147 Maestros: exposición conmemorativa: 120 años Escuela de Artes Plásticas* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2007).

¹⁹ H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991); Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons* (Washington DC: National Museum of American Art, 1990); Diane P. Fischer, ed., *Paris 1900: The 'American School' at the Universal Exposition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999); and Annette Blaugrund, *Paris 1889: American Artists at the Universal Exposition* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1989).

artistic exchanges formed as the result of Latin American artistic pilgrimages to Paris.²⁰ Majluf, through the work of Peruvian artist Francisco Laso (1823-1869), has discussed the theme of indigenism with relation to race and social identity. Focusing on Laso's reception at the Exposition Universelle of 1855, Majluf has argued how cultural authenticity played a pivotal role in the reception of Latin American art. Malosetti Costa, on the other hand, has discussed the work of early modernists Eduardo Sívori (1847-1918) and Eduardo Schiaffino (1858-1935), in relation to their artistic pilgrimage to Paris and to the social and political climate of Buenos Aires.

Mexican and Puerto Rican scholars have also explored and expanded on the theme of transatlantic dialogues between Latin America and Europe. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo's *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (1996) and Robert D. Aguirre's *Informal Empire: Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture* (2005) have focused on the display of Mexican culture in Europe as well as on the collecting practices of Mexican artifacts under the aegis of British imperialism. In Puerto Rico, the ambitious exhibition, "Francisco Oller: A Realist-Impressionist," which attracted the attention of international art historians such as Albert Boime, Edward J. Sullivan, and Linda Nochlin, explored a range of critical issues pertaining to Oller's work, such as his appropriation of Realism and Impressionism and his views on slavery and independence.²¹ These publications are a small testimony to the growing popularity and possibilities of this theme, and bring attention to gaps in the literature.

²⁰ Natalia Majluf, "'Ce n'est pas le Pérou,' or, the Failure of Authenticity: Marginal Cosmopolitans at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855," *Critical Inquiry* (Summer 1997): 868–893; and Laura Malosetti Costa, *Los primeros modernos: arte y sociedad en Buenos Aires a fines del siglo XIX* (Mexico: El Fondo de Cultura Economica de Mexico, 2001).

²¹Francisco Oller, *A Realist-Impressionist: An Exhibition Organized by the Ponce Art Museum to Commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Birth of Puerto Rican Painter Francisco Oller (1833-1917)* (Ponce: Museo de Arte de Ponce, 1983).

In Colombia, monographs have been published on some individual Colombian artists (e.g. Santa María and Cano) who figure prominently in survey texts of Latin American art; however, no one has considered these artists in an international or Parisian context. In 1989, Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza chronicled the individual biographies of twentieth-century Colombian artists in Paris, in *Nuestros pintores en Paris*. Most recently, Frédéric Martínez published *El nacionalismo cosmopolita: la referencia europea en la construcción nacional en Colombia* (2001), which focused on Colombian travelers--primarily writers, historians and politicians--whose travels to Europe subsequently influenced the creation of a Colombian national identity. European scholarship has also delved into the topic of Colombian artists in Paris, by focusing exclusively on Santa María, who was the subject of a 1985 exhibition organized by the Musée Marmottan in Paris.²² Despite efforts among Colombian and French scholars, there has yet to be a publication that applies critical analysis to the study of Colombian artists in Paris or for that matter, addresses the larger issue of the relationship of late nineteenth-century Colombian art to contemporaneous European trends.

Through the study of these artists--Urdaneta, Garay, Santa María, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal--and their impacts, I aim to reexamine and expand our understanding of late nineteenth-century Colombian art. In considering what these artists grappled with in Paris, particularly the cultural tensions that made them resist or accept the French avant-garde, and what they influenced upon their return to Bogotá, namely the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes and its curriculum, I demonstrate how these five artists forever changed Colombian art. The aim of this dissertation is then to not only discuss the experiences of these five artists abroad, but also to expand on the impact of Paris back in

²² *Andrés de Santa María, 1860-1945* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 1985).

Colombia. Analyzing these artists' contributions and contextualizing them among Colombia's unique backdrop of political instability and cultural insularity, I offer a narrative of Colombian art that is at once more three-dimensional and cohesive and deeply rooted in Paris.

Chapter Summaries

The dissertation is divided into four chapters that trace Colombian artistic pilgrimages to Paris, beginning with the artists' training before arriving to France, and concluding with the aftermath of this experience upon their return to Colombia. Chapter One, "Before Paris," considers the education of Colombian artists at home and, in contrast to other Latin American nationals who had access to their own long-established art academies. Since the Academy in Colombia was not established until 1886, there was no homogenous art education and most Colombian artists were trained informally through prints, manuals, and apprenticeships. Although by 1881 there had been a few art exhibitions, it was not until 1886, with the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, that they became commonplace and attracted the greater participation of illustrators, photographers, women, and foreigners. This chapter not only focuses on Colombian artists' education before Paris, but also on their decision to travel to Paris.

Chapter Two, "In Paris," discusses how Colombian artists maintained, or rebelled against, their conservative Colombian upbringing within the milieu of a rising French avant-garde. I also discuss ways that Spanish-speaking artists in Paris gravitated toward each other, and how these friendships influenced their experiences and, especially, their

decision to study at the Académie Julian, an alternative art studio open to foreigners and women. Whereas in Colombia, these artists had been trained as draughtsmen, portraitists, and religious painters, in Paris at the Académie Julian, they were exposed to drawing nudes, caricatures, and representations of the working class. Stylistically, some of these artists absorbed the palette and brushwork of Impressionism, while others emulated the manner of Art Nouveau posters.

Chapter Three, “Exhibiting in Paris and Bogotá,” focuses on these artists’ French-inflected works as exhibited both in France and Colombia. In Paris, their works went largely unnoticed at the Salons and exhibitions of the Académie Julian, whereas in Bogotá the exhibitions of 1899 and 1904 were instrumental in introducing new styles of painting, particularly Impressionism, and in sparking art historical debates between liberals and conservatives. I compare the reception of the artists’ works in both places, pointing out ways that the critics are products of the artistic preferences and cultural values at play in both cities. In addition to considering the venues in which these artists exhibited in both Bogotá and Paris, I also address their lack of presence at universal expositions and the repercussions of their absence.

Chapter Four, “The Legacy of Paris,” demonstrates how the Parisian influence on these artists impacted pedagogy at the Escuela de Bellas Artes. Urdaneta, for example, expanded the techniques of printmaking and established one of Colombia’s most ambitious illustrated magazines, *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* (1881-1888). Santa María and Acevedo Bernal became strong advocates of Impressionism, while Garay championed the tradition of drawing from the live model. Santa María also introduced decorative arts classes to the Escuela de Bellas Artes, adding ceramics, weaving, and woodwork to an arts curriculum that had been largely focused on painting and drawing.

Perhaps the most important contribution of these five artists, however, was the precedent they set by their international travel. These artists opened up Colombian art, until then largely hermetic, to external influences and through this process of exposure, steered it toward a path of internationalism and, eventually, modernism. Although this was a slow process, hindered by intense political disturbances, by the 1950s Colombian art had officially broken away from its provinciality and had gained a place in the international art world.

Chapter 1

Before Paris

In order to understand the significance of this investigation, it is important to look at the political events and social histories that shaped the lives of the Colombian artists under consideration. This chapter aims to contextualize the accomplishments of Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, and Santa María against the highly turbulent and unstable political backdrop that defined the post-independence years of the nineteenth century. Witnessing momentous changes in government, culture, and society, these artists lived during some of the most defining years in the history of Colombia. In addition to providing a discussion of post-independence Colombian history with a particular focus on

its interrelations with the country's major art institutions, this chapter also discusses the biographies and travels of these artists. It is only through an understanding of the origins of Colombia as an independent nation-state and the personal beginnings of these artists that their artistic development in Paris and their influential careers in Bogotá be fully appreciated. In part because these artists were among the first to travel abroad and were also some of the earliest art educators in Bogotá, their accomplishments seem especially remarkable, particularly considering their limited means.

According to Marta Traba the earliest wave of Colombian immigration to Europe was from 1865 and 1885 when Urdaneta and Garay traveled. Another occurred toward the turn of the century, around the time of Cano's and Acevedo Bernal's trips. Traba noted that because Cano and Acevedo Bernal formed part of the second generation of Colombian artists abroad they were "less conscious of being neophytes," and, consequently, more easily "shed the timidity evinced by those of two decades earlier."¹ Although Traba's chronology is correct, she overestimates these artists' bravura and undermines the social and political circumstances under which these artists traveled. In fact, these artists did not always "shed their timidity" as easily as Traba proposed, since pensioned Colombian artists, or those given government stipends were required to produce a high volume of works in a conservative style. In this regard, it is important to compare the biographies of these artists in order to demonstrate the various circumstances under which Colombian artists traveled, as well as the historical factors that permitted, or at times deterred them from doing so.

¹ Marta Traba, "Introduction," in *Art of Latin America, 1900-1980* (Washington D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, 1994), 6.

Political and Social Unrest in Post-Independent Colombia

When Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), influenced by the ideals of the French Enlightenment, engineered Colombia's liberation, the country was part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada (1717-1819). That status changed on August 7, 1819, at the decisive Battle of Boyacá when Colombia won independence from Spain after more than 250 years of colonialism. Bolívar, a descendant of Spanish nobility, was born in Caracas, Venezuela, but educated in Spain and France. His tutor, Simón Rodríguez (1769-1854), introduced him to the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Voltaire (1694-1778). Bolívar served as a diplomat in London, traveling throughout Italy and France and attending the coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821). Disillusioned by the Emperor Napoleon's betrayals of Republican ideals, and influenced by the French and American Revolutions, Bolívar took it upon himself to free Spanish America, earning the moniker, "El Libertador" (the Liberator), despite his utter lack of military training. Bolívar "was not a slave to French or North American examples," as historian John Lynch notes, and he makes the point that "to insist too much on the intellectual origins of Bolívar's revolution and to overemphasize the influence of the past is to obscure his real originality."² Bolívar's application of Euro-American revolutionary ideals was tailored to the demands of his own diverse constituency.

After Colombia's liberation, Bolívar was inspired to free Venezuela and Ecuador, which he accomplished in 1821 and 1822, respectively. On September 7, 1821, Bolívar

² John Lynch, "Lessons from the Age of Reason," in *Simón Bolívar: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 29.

established the confederation of Gran Colombia, which expanded upon the jurisdiction of the former Viceroyalty of New Granada and included present-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama. In that same year, the Congress of Cúcuta drafted the constitution of Gran Colombia, declaring Bogotá the capital and making Bolívar president, and military colonel Francisco de Paula Santander (1792-1840) vice president; thus began the rivalry between Bolívar and Santander, which culminated in two distinct political factions. Those who supported Bolívar, considered conservatives, believed in centralized power and the restoration of alliances with the Catholic Church, while the more liberal followers of Santander believed in secularism, suffrage, and other civil liberties.

Although the flag of Gran Colombia underwent many changes from 1819 to 1831, the iconography consistently reflected the French revolutionary principles that had inspired Bolívar. Colombia's national Coat of Arms today still reflects this influence in the Phrygian cap—symbolic of universal freedom, and in the cornucopias, representative of these territories' bounties (Fig. 2).³ Although the Greeks and Romans wore the Phrygian cap, during the eighteenth century it became an icon of freedom for the French Revolution, and, to a lesser extent, in the American Revolutionary War. In fact the Phrygian cap can also be found in the Coat of Arms of other Latin American countries, like Bolivia, that were also liberated by Bolívar.

After independence, Colombia continued to look to France for political ideas, and according to historian Malcolm Deas, political liberalism arrived to Colombia via this channel, since “nowhere else in Latin America did the events of 1848 in Europe find such eager followers and imitators as among the politicians, artisans, students and even

³ Another transformation that occurred in iconography, and that is not related to French emblems, is the replacement of the eagle of Cundinamarca with the Condor, a South American bird that inhabits the Andean mountains.

soldiers of poor, isolated New Granada.”⁴ While the French Revolution of 1848 propelled a revolutionary wave throughout Europe, in Latin America and particularly in Colombia, its message of social equality, justice, and sovereignty energized the liberal left.

According to Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, Colombians would have been exposed to the political writings of Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869) and Victor Hugo (1802-1885), since their works were regularly published in Colombian periodicals.⁵

As Gran Colombia grew, Bolívar continued to support various Latin American countries, including Bolivia and Peru, in their fights against the Spanish, in the hopes of creating a unified Latin America. Although Bolívar’s commitment to change and his anti-traditional stance were hardly “conservative,” his political ideology was firmly rooted in authoritarian rule.⁶ Bolívar expressed this belief in documents such as the Jamaican Letter (1815) and Bolivian Constitution (1826), in which he explained the need for a strong central government and his desire for a system with a lifelong presidency.

Territorial disputes among Latin American countries after independence, spurred on in part by Bolívar’s political extremism, strong provincial identities, and a lack of economic ties throughout the region, ultimately led to the dissolution of Gran Colombia in 1831. The Republic of New Granada (1831-1858) and the Granadine Confederation (1858-1863) followed, after the secession of Venezuela and Ecuador in 1830. Eventually,

⁴ Malcolm Deas, “Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador: The First Half Century of Independence,” in *Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 533.

⁵ Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, “La influencia de los románticos franceses y de la revolución de 1848 en el pensamiento político colombiano del siglo XIX,” in *La personalidad histórica de Colombia y otros ensayos* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1977; reprint Bogotá: El Ancora Editores, 1994), 162. Frank Safford also discusses the socio-political changes that occurred in Colombia after 1848, in “Social Aspects of Politics in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America: New Granada, 1825-1850,” *Journal of Social History* 5, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 344-370.

⁶ Lynch, 239.

the United States of Colombia was established with the signing of the Rio Negro Constitution on May 8, 1863. The United States of Colombia, which included modern-day Colombia and Panama, emerged during an unusual era of liberalism in the nineteenth century, in which the power of the Catholic Church was restricted and civil rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press were instituted. However, the federalist policies of the United States of Colombia, which distributed power among nine sovereign states--Panama, Antioquia, Magdalena, Bolívar, Santander, Boyacá, Cundinamarca, Tolima, and Cauca--were threatened in 1876 and 1885 by civil wars, and finally in 1886 by the government of the Regeneración, which undermined and eventually wrested away the regionalist power of these states.

In 1886, President Rafael Núñez (1824-1894) replaced the United States of Colombia with the Republic of Colombia, founded on the principles of a centralist government and reformed constitution. With this new system, the federalist policies of the Rio Negro Constitution were reversed, significantly increasing the powers of the presidency. From 1886 to 1899, Núñez also instituted the Regeneración Movement, which signaled a return to the conservative and Catholic values that were dominant before the short-lived era of liberalism. Indeed, Colombia underwent a complete transformation that ran deeper than politics. Such civil liberties as freedom of speech were curtailed and a financial crisis ensued as a result of falling coffee prices, pushing the country close to civil war. These tensions culminated in the Thousand Days War (1899 -1902), which led to Panama's secession in 1903, under pressure from the United States to begin construction on the Panama Canal.⁷ This fluctuation between the political conservatism of

⁷ Under the Hay-Herrán Treaty of January 22, 1903, the Republic of Colombia gave the United States a 100-year lease on the territory of the Isthmus of Panama. When the Senate of Colombia rejected the treaty, Panama, with the help of the United States, led an uprising against Colombian forces. On November

Núñez and his followers and the liberalism of the United States of Colombia continued into the twentieth century, greatly impacting those who depended on government support, particularly the artists of the Escuela de Bellas Artes.

These political tensions were not only characteristic of a recently independent Latin American nation, but also of a country that lacked consolidation. Since most of Colombia remained largely agrarian throughout the nineteenth century, and since the country encompassed an enormous expanse of land, including the territories of Panama and Colombia from 1863 to 1903, maintaining a sense of national unity posed a great challenge. To further complicate issues of national identity, Colombia, like many Latin American countries that had lived through colonization and slavery, possessed a diverse populace consisting of *mulatos*, who were of mixed African and European ancestry, *mestizos*, who were of European and Indian descent, and *criollos* (Creoles), who were descendants of Europeans. Limited means of communication and travel both isolated rural communities and contributed to the country's relative economic stagnation, though Colombia exported gold, silver, tobacco, quinine bark, and coffee, and raised revenue through taxes and customs fees.

To further problematize matters, Catholicism remained at the center of these debates. The conservatives, most notably the followers of Bolívar and the Regeneración, were aligned with the Church, but even liberals, who believed that religion should remain separate from government, were overwhelmingly Catholic. Harvey Kline has interpreted this religious affiliation as “part of the intensity involved in the political struggles of the

3, 1903, Panama proclaimed its independence and later negotiated its own terms and rights over the canal with the United States.

nineteenth century.”⁸ After colonialism, and while Bolívar fought for the abolition of slavery, he allowed the Church to remain intact, fearing, according to historian Frank Safford, “the political strength of the clergy and pious laity.”⁹ Especially during the Regeneración Era, the government guarded against those who “attacked the Roman Catholic church or the armed forces, incited one social class against another, or impugned the monetary system.”¹⁰ Historian Helen Delpar, who has explored how the policies of the Regeneración led to the outbreak of the Thousand Days War, argues that this decree (no. 151 of February 17, 1888), which remained active until 1896, was particularly influential in instigating a revolution.¹¹

The liberals, already upset with the conservative policies of the Regeneración, were further bothered by the elections of 1898. Backed by Miguel Antonio Caro (1843-1909), a major participant of the Regeneración and one of the writers of the Constitution of 1886, Manuel Antonio Sanclemente (1813-1902) won the election of 1898. Once Sanclemente won the election, however, he only served two years in office due to his delicate health and old age. Vice President José Manuel Marroquín’s (1827-1908) rise to power effectively put an end to the liberal opposition, led by Aquileo Parra (1825-1900).¹² Although there were fundamental ideological differences between the liberals

⁸ Harvey Kline, *Colombia: Portrait of Unity and Diversity* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), 36.

⁹ Frank Safford, “Bolívar as Triumphal State Maker and Despairing ‘Democrat,’” in *Simón Bolívar: Essays on the Life and Legacy of the Liberator*, ed. David Bushnell and Lester D. Langley (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 2008): 102. The Roman Catholic Church was intimately tied with the Colombian government until 1991, when it was no longer defined as the State Church. Despite this separation between Church and State, today 90% of the population in Colombia is Catholic, as is typical of many Latin American countries.

¹⁰ Helen Delpar, “Road to Revolution: The Liberal Party of Colombia, 1886-1899,” *The Americas* 32, no. 3 (January 1976): 352.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

and ruling conservatives, it was the suppression, censorship, and economic volatility brought on by the Regeneración that led to the eventual outbreak of the Thousand Days War.

Charles W. Bergquist, in his book *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886-1910*, has identified the sharp decline in coffee prices as the principal reason for war. He also acknowledges, however, that a number of other political and economic factors led up to the Thousand Days War and that “during 1899 each crisis influenced and intensified the other, creating a problem that was much greater than the sum of its separate parts, and generating the conditions which led, seemingly inevitably, to civil war.”¹³ These conflicts, which Kline suggests were rooted in religion, were also intimately tied to the financial crisis and national debt brought about by a drop in coffee prices.¹⁴ The combination of all these factors contributed to a sense of resentment and antagonism among the Colombian populace at large.

In Colombia, however, all these occurrences were accentuated by one distinguishing factor: isolationism. Not only were rural towns and cities isolated from each other, in a country twice the size of Venezuela, but also externally, Colombia suffered from a minimal presence on the international stage.¹⁵ Scholars Marcos Palacio

¹² Marcos Palacio, “From Liberal Decay to Regeneration,” in *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002*, trans. Richard Stoller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 37.

¹³ Charles W. Bergquist, *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1978), 103.

¹⁴ According to Bergquist, “the decline in production reflected falling world coffee prices after 1875. The average price of Colombian coffee on the New York market fell from 20.5 cents per pound in 1875 to 10.1 cents per pound in 1884.” *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵ The minimal, and at times complete lack of, presence of Colombia at the universal exhibitions of the nineteenth century, particularly in Paris, are discussed at greater length in Chapter 3, as a consequence of these political circumstances and isolationist policies. Chapter 3 also explores how Colombian artists, in comparison to other Latin American artists, had fewer venues in which to exhibit their work internationally.

and Frank Safford in their 2002 book, *Colombia: país fragmentado, sociedad dividida*, have touched upon the consequences of this remoteness, arguing that the “scarcity and dispersion of the population,” as well as the topography of Colombia, which includes a dense concentration of Amazonian jungle, impeded “the development of ways of communication and the integration of Colombia’s economy.”¹⁶

Minimal territorial access and a lack of national unity, Malcolm Deas has argued, led to the suppression of a working-class consciousness and to the dissolution of labor organizations. This in turn, generated mounting tensions between the classes that culminated in the bloody Santa Marta banana massacre of 1928, in which the Colombian army killed unarmed workers of the United Fruit Company while they protested in the town of Ciénaga for new employment contracts.¹⁷ The difficulties of travel within the country further complicated the domestic policies of the Colombian government, adding another layer of complexity to an already fragile situation.¹⁸ The urgency of these national problems took focus away from Colombia’s international agenda, and certainly from support for the development of the arts.

The Thousand Days War ended in 1902, after four years of fighting, 100,000 deaths, and the signing of two peace treaties. The postwar years were relatively peaceful, though a definite return to liberal politics arrived after the *Revolución en Marcha* of 1934,

¹⁶ “escasez y dispersión de la población...el desarrollo de las vías de comunicación y la integración económica de Colombia.” Marcos Palacio and Frank Safford, *Colombia: país fragmentado, sociedad dividida* (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2002), 15.

¹⁷ Deas, 660-663.

¹⁸ Even in the early twentieth century, Gabriel García Márquez, the famed Colombian novelist and Nobel Prize winner in Literature, personally experienced the difficulties of traveling from one city to another. In the opening to his memoir, *Vivir para contarla*, (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2002), 12-30, García Márquez described the long and difficult journey he undertook with his mother in 1950 to travel approximately 40 miles from Barranquilla to Aracataca, via train, boat, and horse car.

which began with the presidency of Alfonso López Pumarejo (1886-1959). Implementing major social reforms such as unionization, López Pumarejo and his Liberal Republic ended in 1946 when conservative Mariano Ospina Pérez (1891-1976) won the presidency. The next major crisis of the century, known as “La Violencia” (The Violence) (1948-1958), was instigated by the assassination of populist left-wing political leader, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (1898-1948). Indeed, all of Latin America witnessed civil unrest during its post-independence years, as well as a leftist revival in the 1960s, following the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

Colombian Art Before 1886

During Colombia’s post-independence period, but before the establishment of an official arts academy, politicians and the rising bourgeoisie were the main commissioners of art works. Portraits of national military heroes, as well as those of El Libertador, were particularly popular. Colombians, eager to record their victory and the new leaders of their republic, entrusted their portraits mainly to the Figueroa family of artists. This dynasty, which began with Pedro José Figueroa (1770-1838) and continued with his sons, José Celestino, José Miguel, and José Santos, recorded the new political elite of Gran Colombia, and most notably Simón Bolívar (Fig. 3). Another influential portraitist was José María Espinosa (1796-1883), who had fought during the war of independence and is best remembered for his battle scenes and heroic portraits of Bolívar.¹⁹ Whether these

¹⁹ For a more detailed explanation of José María Espinosa’s artistic career, see Beatriz González, *José María Espinosa: abanderado del arte en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 1998).

artists painted portraits or historical scenes, the arts production of the early post-independence years was marked by a deep sense of patriotism and by a desire, on the part of both artist and subject, to document the events and figures of independence.

Forms of religious art, primarily representations of biblical characters and narratives, were also prevalent in Colombia. This tradition, which had been established in Colombia as early as 1525 during Spanish colonization, continued throughout the seventeenth century in the work of Gregorio Vásquez de Arce y Ceballos (1638-1711), one of the most celebrated colonial painters. His devotional panels of saints and patrons, such as *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (Fig. 4), reveal the anatomical awkwardness and lack of perspective found in colonial painting. Like many Colombian artists of this time, Vásquez was inspired by European engravings.²⁰ This European influence continued into the eighteenth century, practiced by a second generation of native-born artists who expanded on the work of their predecessors by creating more ornate and complex compositions, characteristic of the Baroque. A long-standing tradition of religious painting endured in the work of nineteenth-century Colombian painters, primarily in the work of Acevedo Bernal and Cano, whose religious art production was born primarily out of financial necessity rather than a desire for artistic exploration.

Along with portraiture and devotional works, landscape painting, a new genre, rose in popularity during the nineteenth century. José Manuel Groot (1800-1878), a pupil of Pedro José Figueroa, and Ramón Torres Méndez (1809-1885) were the earliest landscapists. Both were also *costumbrista* painters who represented local mannerisms and

²⁰ Marta Fajardo de Rueda, "Art in the Viceroyalty of New Granada," in *Barroco de La Nueva Granada: Colonial Art from Colombia and Ecuador*, eds. Alexandra Kennedy and Marta Fajardo de Rueda (New York: The Americas Society, 1992), 45.

folk customs in their works.²¹ Figueroa and Torres Méndez were the first native-born individuals to survey Colombia and its people at a time when foreign travelers were more prevalent than national ones. The Prussian explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), along with botanist Aimé Bonpland (1773-1858), toured the territories of Latin America (principally Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico) from 1799 to 1804, in search of scientific data. Humboldt and Bonpland discovered new species, such as the electric eel, as well as topographical and botanical novelties. Humboldt published their findings in lengthy illustrated and encyclopedic books, such as the two-volume *Vues des cordillères et monuments des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* (1810).²² Inspired by Humboldt's discoveries, and Colombia's recent independence, travelers of all sorts, but mainly scientists, botanists, reporters, and illustrators, began their journeys to the Southern Hemisphere.

Europeans knew very little of these territories, and the desire for travel, albeit born of an impetus for reportage and scholarly documentation, was also reflective of a growing desire to rediscover and reconquer these territories. Scholars such as Mary Louise Pratt have positioned Humboldt and Bonpland, along with other American and European explorers, within a historic lineage of colonizers, which include Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) and Francisco Pizarro (1471-1541), the conqueror of Peru (and, incidentally, the name of Humboldt and Bonpland's ship).²³ For many Europeans, travel illustrations, which circulated in books and other illustrated publications, constituted the only visual

²¹ For an extended discussion on Ramón Torres Méndez, see Beatriz González, *Ramón Torres Méndez: entre lo pintoresco y la picaresca* (Bogotá: Valencia Editores, 1986).

²² Alexandre von Humboldt, *Vues des cordillères et monuments des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* (Paris: F. Scoell, 1810).

²³ Mary L. Pratt, "Alexander von Humboldt and the Reinvention of América," in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 111-143.

images they had of Latin America, which was represented as a virgin and exotic territory, or what art historian Katherine Manthorne has termed a “tropical renaissance” filled with exotic mystique ripe for exploitation.²⁴ These illustrations sparked a foreign, but also national, interest for travel within the territories of Colombia. The Expedición Botánica (1783-1816), initiated under Spanish rule, and the Comisión Corográfica (1850-1859), started after the dissolution of Gran Colombia, were intended to document the geography of the Republic of New Granada, of which Colombians knew very little.²⁵ Since Colombia had never been properly documented or fully explored, these government-led expeditions were fruitful in producing the earliest visual accounts and maps of the region.

The art production of post-independence Colombia also included prints and miniatures. Despite the great variety of media and genres found in Colombian art, however, *costumbrismo* and portraiture dominated arts production in the nineteenth century.²⁶ The popularity of these two genres demonstrates not only a desire on the part of the Colombian elite to record their ascendancy into the bourgeoisie, something best done via portraiture, but also a newfound sense of nationalism, reflected in the demand for representations of country life and customs. Even Colombian critic Eugenio Barney Cabrera described the limited artistic activity of the first half of the nineteenth century by

²⁴ Katherine Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America, 1839-1879* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989).

²⁵ For a more detailed description of the Comisión Corográfica, see Efraín Sánchez, *Gobierno y geografía: Agustín Codazzi y la Comisión Corográfica de la Nueva Granada* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1999).

²⁶ Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo, *La miniatura, la pintura y el grabado en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1980), 176.

focusing on only two accomplishments, those of the Figueroas and their pupils, and on the Comisión Corográfica.²⁷

Colombian Art Education Before 1886

The instruction of painting, drawing and sculpture, which was promulgated in small and informal arts academies in nineteenth century Colombia, was imported from Europe, through manuals, as well as illustrations, newspapers, prints, and photographs, which artists copied. These continued to be influential even after the establishment of formal art institutions. Colombian artists who undertook pilgrimages abroad fostered another form of European cultural importation, as did the presence of foreigners in Colombia. European explorers, like British watercolorist Edward Walhouse Mark (1817-1895), as well as artists from other Latin American countries, such as Mexican Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez (1824-1904) also contributed to the development of Colombia's artistic patrimony in the nineteenth century. While Santiago Gutiérrez established art schools in Colombia, Mark established a "traveler aesthetics" informed by science and observation, which according to Beatriz González, bridged the gap between realism and romanticism in landscape painting.²⁸ Through these multiple channels of information, art education in Colombia took its first steps toward institutionalization.

²⁷ Eugenio Barney Cabrera, "La actividad artística en el siglo XIX," in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, eds. J. G. Cobo Borda and Santiago Mutis Durán, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1979-1982), 567-594.

²⁸ Beatriz González, *América: una confrontación de miradas*, Ramón Torres Méndez y Edward Walhouse Mark (Bogotá: Editora Nacional de Colombia, 1984).

The earliest art school in Colombia was founded in 1863 by the Jesuit priest Santiago Páramo, who established the Colegio San Bartolomé. The focus here was on painting and drawing, with an intense leaning towards religious subject matter. In 1881, Mexican Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez (1824-1904) established the Academia Gutiérrez, perhaps the most ambitious and famous private arts institution of the nineteenth century. Santiago Gutiérrez was an internationally celebrated Mexican painter who had been formally educated at the long-established and prestigious Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City. In 1861, Santiago Gutiérrez was offered a scholarship to travel to Europe but was denied this opportunity because of a lack of funding that resulted from the War of Three Years (1857-1861). Deciding to fund his own trip, Santiago Gutiérrez traveled to France, Italy, and Spain in 1868. As was the case with other Latin American artists who traveled without restrictions, the lack of government oversight allowed Santiago Gutiérrez to “freely move in agreement with his temperament,” which included an “insatiable thirst to discover the world.”²⁹

From the port city of Le Havre, France, Santiago Gutiérrez traveled to the United States in 1871. In New York City, he met Rafael Pombo (1833-1912), a Colombian poet and diplomat.³⁰ Pombo asked Santiago Gutiérrez to establish an art academy in Bogotá in 1873. The project, however, was thwarted by government regulation and a lack of funding. Both in Mexico and Colombia, as well as in other Latin American countries, art programs and scholarships were often delayed or cancelled due to precarious political and economic conditions. After returning to Mexico in 1874, Santiago Gutiérrez traveled

²⁹ “moverse con una libertad totalmente acorde con su temperamento...sed insaciable de conocer el mundo.” *Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez: pasión y destino* (Toluco: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1993), 22.

³⁰ For an extended discussion on Pombo’s diplomatic and literary career in New York, see Kirsten Silva Gruesz, “Diplomatic License: Pombo in New York,” in *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 163-176.

again to Colombia in 1880 and, this time, was successful in his attempts to establish the Academia Gutiérrez.

Classes at the Academia Gutiérrez were free, but enrollment was limited and the arts curriculum was restricted to painting, drawing, and printmaking. Prints as well as images in newspapers supplemented the few models available to students there. Cano was one of the earliest to understand the importance of illustrated journals and newspapers. As Jorge Cárdenas Hernández has argued, it was through these media that Cano became aware of French Naturalist artists Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884), Jules Bretón (1827-1906), and Alfred Philippe Roll (1846-1919), who all eventually had a major influence on his own production.³¹

The sorts of illustrated publications to which Cano was drawn tended to be directed towards a European, rather than Latin American or Spanish-speaking, readership and were not widely distributed in Colombia.³² Some Spanish-language publications, such as *La Revista Latino-americana*, published from June to December 1874, and *Los Andes*, published only in 1878, were printed in Paris by expatriated Colombians. *La Revista Latino-americana*, the first of them, aimed to demonstrate the achievements of Latin American countries in Europe, as well as to disseminate aspects of European culture within Latin America. Although this publication was largely devoted to international commerce and political issues, there were sections—albeit taken from another publication, *El Tiempo* (Paris)³³--that were translated into Spanish, such as the “Revista

³¹ Jorge Cárdenas Hernández, *Francisco Antonio Cano, 1865-1935* (Medellín: Amtex, 1990), n.p.

³² According to Frédéric Martínez, in *El nacionalismo cosmopolita: la referencia europea en la construcción nacional en Colombia 1845-1900* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 2001), 120-121, there were two distributors of foreign newspapers in Bogotá in 1867, Francisco Ramírez and Lázaro María Pérez. This demonstrates the limits on access to printed information.

³³ Federico de la Vega, “Crónica de Paris,” *La Revista Latino-americana* 2 (1874): 496-497.

de las Bellas Artes en Francia” (“Magazine of the Fine Arts in France”)—that discussed European art news, including the recent death of popular Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny (1838-1874). It was not until 1878, with the founding of *Los Andes*, that foreign art news became more accessible to the Colombian public, both at home and abroad.

Organized by Urdaneta, *Los Andes* reflected the personal interests of its artist founder, and discussed art exhibitions and trends, along with specific paintings and artists. Unlike other publications, such as the *La Revista Latino-americana* (1874), *El Americano* (1872), and *El Mundo Americano* (1875), *Los Andes* was unique in that it included illustrations, ranging from Salon paintings to representations of pavilions at the Exposition Universelle of 1878. Frédéric Martínez, in his discussion on how European books and newspapers comprised a form of “typographic diplomacy,”³⁴ has suggested that *Los Andes* carried a great deal of importance among “the cultured circles of Colombia,” particularly for its “graphic quality.”³⁵ The illustrations in *Los Andes*, many of which were executed by Urdaneta himself, stood out at a time when publications by Colombians in Paris were almost entirely devoid of them.

Returning to the idea of “typographic diplomacy,” which refers to the political power of the press, both *La Revista Latino-americana* and *Los Andes* shared the goal of introducing Europeans to Latin American news, and *vice versa*. Although these publications had an established readership in France, where they were circulated among newspaper agencies and consulates, they had a stronger influence in Colombia, where access to printed information was fairly limited and often censored. *Los Andes* was especially influential because it was published in both French and Spanish, and was a

³⁴ “diplomacia tipográfica.” Martínez, 257.

³⁵ “los círculos cultos de Colombia... calidad gráfica.” Martínez, 265.

source of national pride for Colombians, since it was published by Colombians, including Urdaneta, Ignacio Gutiérrez Ponce, and Ricardo S. Pereira. Like *La Revista Latinoamericana* (1874), *El Americano* (1872), and *El Mundo Americano* (1875), *Los Andes* unfortunately had a short run, ending after only thirteen issues.

Back in Colombia, newspapers were also a struggling business venture, however since Colombian scholars have typically discussed this topic regionally rather than examining its development on a national scale, the history of print media in Colombia remains incomplete and fragmentary.³⁶ Although by 1884 there were one hundred thirty-eight newspapers in the country, many of them experienced very short runs, and had limited readership, due to a lack of proper distribution channels that kept them from reaching distant provinces. As a result, their circulation potential was minimal and mainly restricted to urban centers, such as Bogotá and Medellín, where they were consumed by elite and erudite readers. The limited circulation of the Colombian national press in combination with censorship rules, especially during the Regeneración, and short print runs, seriously limited the public's access to information.

In addition to accessibility, the growth of newspapers also depended on developments in printmaking. Foreign artists were some of the earliest participants in its development through the establishment of printing studios, like the Casa de la Moneda in Bogotá, and the introduction of new technologies, like lithography, which arrived in Bogotá in 1871 and Medellín three years later. Foreign-trained Colombian artists were

³⁶ Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo in *Historia del grabado en Colombia* (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1960) focused mainly on the history of printmaking in Bogotá. Santiago Londoño Vélez in *Historia de la pintura y el grabado en Antioquia* (Medellín: Editorial Universidad de Antioquia, 1995) focused on the development of printmaking in Medellín.

also influential, most notably Urdaneta, who in 1881 introduced wood engravings through the Escuela del Grabado and Colegio de San Bartolomé, and Pedro Carlos Manrique (1860-1927), who established the first photogravure printing studio in Bogotá in 1898 (Fig. 5). Many of these advances were introduced first to Bogotá, and their pioneers were affiliated with the Escuela de Bellas Artes there.

For those who did not have access to newspapers, information continued to be passed down through word-of-mouth. This trickle-down effect has been discussed by various historians, including Luis Javier Ortiz Mesa, who has concluded that because access to tangible information was so restricted, socializing was in fact the most common, and perhaps the most essential, way of sharing information.³⁷ Frédéric Martínez has also mentioned how “national intermediaries,” such as “publicists, clerics, professors and politicians” were the principal exponents of European news.³⁸ In a similar manner, travelers were also important “artistic intermediaries” between Europe and Colombia.

In looking at how the role of women changed, in part due to the printed press, one could better assess the influence of journalism, through an analysis of socialization among women during this period. Newspapers that targeted a female audience (featuring poems, novels, short stories, and moral excerpts), also discussed the role of women in society. Patricia Londoño, who has discussed gender roles in late nineteenth-century Colombia, has argued that publications aimed at women “who lived very informed of the European way of life,” reflected “the seed of discontent that some women started to feel

³⁷ Luis Javier Ortiz Mesa, “La sociedad colombiana en el siglo XIX,” in *Las mujeres en la historia de Colombia*, ed. Magdala Velásquez Toro (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 1995), 199.

³⁸ “intermediarios nacionales...publicistas, clérigos, maestros y políticos.” Martínez, 131.

against their traditional roles.”³⁹ Such feminist complaints, which originated in Europe and were featured in serial publications such as *Le Journal des Dames* (1799) and *Cabinet des Modes* (1795), also gained currency among Colombian women through social interactions. These publications not only contributed to the women’s rights movement, but they also influenced the development of the arts in Colombia, allowing for female participation within a wider societal arena, including the arts.

Socialization helped to empower women and artists alike. In fact, social networking was not only a part of their experience in Bogotá, but as discussed in the following chapter, it was integral to their survival overseas in Paris. Art schools, such as the Academia Gutiérrez, were important places of social gathering, as were exhibitions, which not only provided artists with the opportunities to show their work, but also expanded their knowledge of others’ work. These forms of both social and professional contact, which have been underexplored in recent scholarship, were crucial to the dissemination of outside influences in Colombia and consequently to the modernization of art.

Before the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1886, exhibitions were haphazard affairs with fine art paired with artisanal crafts, putting all on equal footing when the “fine arts” had traditionally been considered a higher art form. In 1871, the works of Urdaneta and Garay were shown in the Section of Art and Domestic Industry, for example, alongside still-life paintings and weavings by women artists, thus relegating male artists to the level of artisans and female artists. Although this distinction between the fine arts and crafts was eventually clarified, discrimination on the basis of gender

³⁹ “vivían muy pendientes del estilo de la vida europeo... el germen de descontento que algunas mujeres empezaron a sentir contra sus roles tradicionales.” Patricia Londoño, “Publicaciones periódicas dirigidas a la mujer en Colombia, 1858-1930,” in *Las mujeres en la historia de Colombia*, 358.

continued even after 1886, when more women than men had their work displayed at the Academy's 1899 exhibition, but only the male artists were critiqued and debated seriously.⁴⁰

The Escuela de Bellas Artes represented the institutionalization of art, and according to Eduardo Serrano, it marked the earliest transformation from artisan to artist.⁴¹ The idea of “ ‘contemporary art’ in the country,”⁴² Serrano argues, also emerged in 1886, due to an increase in artistic production. In regards to art criticism, this was the first time that critics, via newspaper articles and books, actively debated the direction of art in their country. In Bogotá, the exhibitions of 1899 and 1904 were of prime importance, because they documented a definitive stylistic change from Academic painting to Impressionism. Also, these exhibitions saw the participation of the first generation of academically-trained artists to have been educated at the Escuela de Bellas Artes.

⁴⁰ “Bellas Artes,” *El Heraldo*, no. 842 (Aug. 24, 1899): n.p. Before 1899, women artists were taken even less seriously, as noted by the words of one critic, who described the women's exhibit as “ ‘the jewel of the exhibition.’ ” (“ ‘la joya de la exposicion.’ ”) See “Primera exposición anual de la Escuela de Bellas Artes,” *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* 5, no. 111 (March 1, 1887): 243,

⁴¹ Eduardo Serrano, *Cien años de arte colombiano 1886-1986* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1985), 17.

⁴² “ ‘arte contemporáneo’ en el país.” *Ibid.*

Traveling to Paris, Rather Than Madrid

Since there was no established arts education system in Colombia before 1886, this country's artists tended to travel abroad for training. For many, the costs were prohibitively expensive, however with the invention of the steamboat in 1840, Europe became more accessible. The steamboat, as opposed to boats propelled by sails, shortened the travel time between Colombia and Europe from a few months to a few weeks. Such transatlantic voyages typically departed from Colombia's Atlantic coast.⁴³ The journey for most travelers, however, began inland on the Magdalena River, Colombia's most important waterway, which traverses the western half of the country and separates the regions of Antioquia and Cundinamarca, then empties into the Atlantic. Those who could afford such voyages included wealthy businessmen, successful professionals or diplomatic personnel and as such they tended to be from Bogotá or Medellín, the second largest city. Since both of these cities are inland, their journey began in the Magdalena River, continued through the Caribbean and concluded in port cities like Marseilles, Le Havre, Liverpool, and Barcelona.

As a result of the invention of the steamboat, and an increase in foreign investment and commercial exports, the number of transatlantic travelers increased significantly towards the end of the nineteenth century. From 1845 to 1900, an estimated 580 Colombians traveled to Europe, and the largest majority, approximately 50, traveled

⁴³ Colombia is the only country in South America to have both an Atlantic and Pacific Coast, therefore the options for maritime travel and potential destinations were greater, especially after the creation of the Panama Canal in 1914.

around 1880,⁴⁴ when commercial exports of coffee, tobacco, and quinine bark were high. Especially during the *Regeneración* and before the Thousand Days War, from 1886 to 1899, a large number of Colombian artists traveled to Paris, including Garay, Cano, Manrique, Salvador Moreno (1874-1940), Luis María Gaviria and Domingo Bolívar, accounting for at least 14% of the travelers to Europe.⁴⁵ Somewhat paradoxically, the insular policies and nation-building efforts of the *Regeneración* permitted an increase in the number of government-pensioned artists. This, presumably, was due to a rise in commercial exports, which encouraged the growth of the Colombian economy, and in turn, the government's access to funds. As mentioned previously, it was not until the price of coffee began to fall that political tensions started to foment, resulting in the outbreak of the Thousand Days War, and consequently in a decrease in the amount of government scholarships.

Although most Colombian travelers went abroad seeking an advanced education, their intention to travel was also rooted in the allure of the Old World. Frédéric Martínez, in his chronicling of Colombian travelers to Europe, explains that for Colombian travelers, and especially for the elite, European literary, philosophical, and visual culture were an integral part, if not the basis, of their cultural life back home. As a result, many traveled to Europe out of a “curiosity for the Ancient World that ever since infancy was nourished by literature... [and] the vague sensation that it must be discovered before

⁴⁴ Martínez, 202, compiled this database of Colombian travelers to Europe based on correspondence, periodicals, diplomatic and consular listings, and catalogues of international exhibitions.

⁴⁵ According to Martínez's database, there were 95 Colombian travelers to Europe from 1885 to 1899; and according to my Table 1, which provides a list of Colombian artists who traveled to France during this time, there were at least 14 artists among the group. Considering the amount of Colombian travelers to Europe, which included Spain, England, Italy and France, 10 travelers to France in a time period of 14 years is a considerable amount. Also, this number excludes artists like Santa María, who lived permanently in France, as well as those whose trips have not been documented.

dying.”⁴⁶ Although most Colombian travelers were descendants of established Creole families, not all traveling artists fell into this category. Garay and Cano are examples of artists who traveled on government aid. Acevedo Bernal is unique in that he traveled to both Paris and New York without personal wealth or government assistance.

For Colombian artists Paris and Madrid were particular European magnets. The choice of which city reveals the type and personality of the traveler. Whereas Rome and Madrid attracted numerous travelers, these cities were the destinations of aspiring clerics and devout Christians. London, a financial hub, attracted mainly businessmen. Paris had no religious or distinctly commercial affiliation, but since it was the cultural capital of Europe, it offered aspiring writers, musicians, and painters a strong artistic tradition to emulate. Santiago Gutiérrez, who had traveled to Italy and Spain before arriving in France, for example, described his excitement and emotion about Paris, as well as his luck at having met Mexican painter José Salomé Piña (1830-1909) there, without whom he “would have never discovered the city enough to have enjoyed it or to have taken advantage of it.”⁴⁷

Although Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, Moreno, Gaviria, and Bolívar chose Paris, there were a number of other Colombians who chose Madrid including Pantaleón Mendoza (1855-1910), Rafael Tavera (1878-1957), and Pedro Alcántara Quijano Montero (1878-1953). For these artists, Madrid seemed the most logical destination because of its language, religion, and traditions, which were all more closely aligned with those of Colombia. In fact the number of Colombian travelers to Madrid

⁴⁶ “curiosidad por el Antiguo Mundo que desde la infancia viene siendo nutrida por la lectura...la vaga sensación de que hay que conocerlo antes de morir.” Ibid., 204.

⁴⁷ “se hubiera privado de conocer la ciudad lo suficiente para disfrutarla y sacarle provecho.” *Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez: pasión y destino*, 40.

significantly increased after 1912, when the *Círculo de Bellas Artes* was established, encouraging Colombian artists to return to their Hispanic heritage. The presence of these artists in Madrid, as well as the presence of other travelers who visited multiple European countries, including Spain, such as Ricardo Borrero Álvarez (1874-1931) and Ricardo Moros Urbina (1865-1942), suggests that Paris was not the most obvious destination for Colombian travelers.

Paris, described by Martínez as “a new Babylon, a city of pleasures, vices and corruption,”⁴⁸ embodied the darker side of Europe, the archetype of moral and social corruption. Further indication of the city’s depravity, according to the politician and future Colombian president Carlos Holguín (1832-1894), was its high number of immigrants and suicides. Holguín remarked:

And how about suicides? The number of suicides committed last year, which was not exceptional, and which have been officially recorded, was more than seven thousand. Think about what seven thousand cadavers means and try to envision them with your imagination on a battleground, and that to us resembles a horror.⁴⁹

The dramatic language used by Holguín to describe the “horror” of 7,000 suicides was typical among members of the *Regeneración*. The perception of Paris as a city of immorality was further reinforced with the signing of the Concordat on December 31, 1887, through which Colombia reinforced its ties with the Roman Catholic Church.

⁴⁸ “una nueva Babilonia, ciudad de placeres, vicios y corrupción.” Martínez, 440. Based on travel books, such as Nicolas Tanco Armero, *Recuerdos de un viaje a Europa* (Bogotá: La América, 1873) and Medardo Rivas, *Viajes por Colombia, Francia, Inglaterra y Alemania* (Bogotá: Imprenta de F. Pontón, 1885), Martínez explains how Paris was seen as an immoral and subversive city by members of the *Regeneración*, who resisted the city’s political liberalism and loose morals.

⁴⁹ “Y los suicidios?...los suicidios cometidos en el año pasado, que no fue excepcional, y de que hay constancia oficial, pasan de siete mil. Piense usted en lo que son siete mil cadáveres y vealos con la imaginación tendidos sobre un campo de batalla, y aquello nos parece un horror.” Carlos Holguín, “Revista de Europa,” *El Repertorio colombiano* 7 (July - December 1881): 431.

During this period when the city was demonized, the number of Colombian travelers paradoxically increased.⁵⁰ For artists who traveled independently, like Acevedo Bernal, their decision to study in Paris might demonstrate the allure and rebellious mystique that this city held among adventurous individuals. In discussing North American artists, Kathleen Adler, co-curator and contributing author to the exhibition catalogue *Americans in Paris 1860-1900*, describes how the bohemian spirit of Paris was:

...part of the huge attraction the city held for them...[In fact] the contrast between the freedom they enjoyed in Paris, the potential for breaking social rules and behaving in unconventional ways, and the strictures of life at home was liberating – if often frightening.⁵¹

For pensioned artists, who were not necessarily attracted to the bohemian spirit of the city and who did not share a curiosity for the ancient world, their decision to travel to Paris was generally rooted in artistic tradition.

North American artists were also drawn to educational opportunities in Paris, which H. Barbara Weinberg identifies as the main purpose of their trip.⁵² That Paris represented more than just artistic educational opportunities, however, is clear since even after the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá, Paris continued to attract Colombian artists. In fact, the strongest promoters of this artistic pilgrimage were the artists who had already traveled to Paris, such as Cano. A letter from him to then-President, Carlos E. Restrepo, asked for government money so that he and two younger

⁵⁰ According to Martínez, 232, the number of Colombian travelers to Paris exceeded the number of Colombians in any other country after 1880.

⁵¹ Kathleen Adler, “‘We’ll Always Have Paris’: Paris as Training Ground and Proving Ground,” in *Americans in Paris 1860-1900*, eds. Kathleen Adler and others (London: National Gallery, 2006), 16.

⁵² H. Barbara Weinberg, in *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1991), describes specific art studios that attracted North American artists, namely the École des Beaux-Arts, the studios of Gérôme, Cabanel, Bonnat and Carolus-Duran, and the Académie Julian.

students could travel to Paris.⁵³ Even the critics who noted “the noticeable progress in national painting,” also expressed doubts about the advancement of painting without international travel or the existence in Colombia of “museums in which to study or copy the great masters.”⁵⁴ Both before and after 1886, traveling to Paris was seen as the next logical step for any serious artist who demonstrated true potential and interest in his own professional development.

Another aspect of a trip to Paris was an attraction to nonconformity that merits further discussion. In the case of Garay, for example, who was deeply attracted to academic masters and hesitant to embrace the avant-garde, his conservatism was a perpetuation of the old-fashioned values of his patrons, who were members of the Regeneración. Nevertheless, that did not undermine the inherently contentious reputation of Paris. In fact, it was in Paris and under the pupilage of Académie Julian Professors William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905) and Tony Robert-Fleury (1838-1912) that Garay experimented with the most controversial subject of all: the nude. In other words, despite the fact that Garay was “conservative” in some of his artistic choices and that the impetus for his trip to Paris was to encounter the “Academic,” his decision to travel there, as well as his enrollment at the Académie Julian was, in and of itself, revolutionary. Once there, the liberating spirit of the city affected even the most conservative of artists.

Just as Colombian artists still traveled to Europe after the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, the same was true throughout Latin America. The Academia de San Carlos, established in Mexico City in 1785 during the colonial period, was the

⁵³ Francisco A. Cano, Medellín, to Carlos E. Restrepo, Medellín, May 8, 1911, transcript in the hand of Francisco A. Cano, Archives of Carlos E. Restrepo, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín.

⁵⁴ “el adelanto que se nota en la pintura nacional... museos donde estudiar y copiar a los grandes maestros.” “Salón Garay,” *La Crónica* (February 3, 1898): n.p.

earliest arts academy in the Americas. Even after its establishment, Mexican artists such as Santiago Gutiérrez traveled to Europe throughout much of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the presence of an Academy, both in Colombia and Mexico, served as a catalyst for promoting artistic dialogue with other European countries. Much as foreign trade opened up commercial exchange and diplomatic missions encouraged mutual diplomacy, so, too, did art academies cultivate an artistic relationship between Latin America and the European community. As with Cano, the European-trained instructors at the Escuela de Bellas Artes were particularly influential in encouraging artistic pilgrimages, as well as in introducing outside influences.

Although Beatriz González has discussed the importance and experiences of these transatlantic travelers, she has not discussed the channels through which these influences were diffused.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Marta Fajardo de Rueda has argued that because:

it was very difficult to exit the country and only a privileged few could do it, direct contact with European culture was very limited. The School of Fine Arts then broke with this isolation, insofar as each member, in sharing their personal experiences, introduced new ways of seeing.⁵⁶

To her credit, Fajardo de Rueda highlights the importance of socialization among artists, which resulted in the diffusion of outside influences through various social channels, as well as through their role as educators, professors and directors.

⁵⁵ Beatriz González, *El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 2004), 105-109. González also describes these artistic pilgrimages as “academic” experiences, not taking into consideration the conditions under which these artists traveled (whether on government scholarship or independently) or their different degrees of transformation. As a result, she concludes that their trips to Paris only served to give continuity to the Classical lessons they had acquired in Bogotá, when in fact, their trips exposed them to a great variety of influences, such as the female nude.

⁵⁶ “resultaba muy difícil salir al exterior y solo algunos privilegiados podían hacerlo, los contactos directos con la cultura europea eran muy escasos. La Escuela de Bellas Artes, entonces logra romper con el aislamiento, en la medida en que cada uno de sus miembros al aportar su experiencia personal introduce nuevas formas de ver.” Marta Fajardo de Rueda, *Presencia de los maestros 1886-1960* (Bogotá: El Museo de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1986), 2.

The European example remained at the center of arts education in Latin America, and especially during the early institutionalization of art. In Peru, as in Colombia, the Academy was established by local artists who had returned from Europe, but they did it at the behest of Peruvian President José Pardo (1864-1947) in 1918. Pardo urged Daniel Hernández (1856-1932) to return from Paris to both establish and direct the Escuela Nacional Superior Autónoma de Bellas Artes del Perú (ENSABAP). Brazil's Academia Imperial de Bellas Artes was founded much earlier, in 1826, under the supervision of French painter Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768-1848). This demonstrates the requirements of a European presence, as in the case of Mexico and Brazil, and influence, transmitted via artists, prints, photographs, casts, and copies, in the establishment of art academies in Latin America.

At the Academia de San Carlos, for example, the European system of art education, which emphasized line drawing and tonal modeling, served as its overarching prototype, establishing the parameters of taste that governed Mexican art throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Elizabeth Wilder Weismann has argued that in providing young and aspiring artists with “the rules defining Beauty, and the techniques proper to the Fine Arts,” the arts establishment warded off “vulgarity and, worst of all, provincialism.”⁵⁷ While the European style of training provided artists with the technical expertise needed to represent their national identities and local histories, it held them hostage to these European standards. Because this artistic dialogue between Europe and Latin America was not reciprocal, the imposition of this European model, which existed since colonization, represented an inherent imbalance of power.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Wilder Weismann, “Foreword,” in *Mexican Art and the Academy of San Carlos, 1785-1915*, ed. Jean Charlot (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 10.

As a result, Latin American artists were seen as a secondary denomination of European artists, peripheral characters who operated in response to the artistic center of power. In the case of nineteenth-century Puerto Rican painter Francisco Oller (1833-1917), Linda Nochlin argues that his contact with the artistic center, Paris, "...should be thought of not just in terms of oppression or domination, but as the source of liberation and stimulation as well."⁵⁸ Because of Paris, Oller adopted aspects of both Realism and Impressionism, and consequently changed the face of Puerto Rican art, making art education in San Juan freer and more egalitarian.⁵⁹ The example of Oller is particularly relevant to this discussion on Colombian artists in Paris, since both Puerto Rico and Colombia benefited from this European exposure after a lack of contact in the nineteenth century that created a type of insularity.⁶⁰

Although Nochlin touches upon the benefits of this power relation between Europe and Latin America, she does not elaborate on its consequences.⁶¹ In the nineteenth century, when dependency on Europe was not only artistic, but also financial, political, literary, and otherwise, this disparity in power was particularly damaging. According to theorist Nelly Richard, one should not undermine the "social and economic

⁵⁸ Linda Nochlin, "Courbet, Oller, and a Sense of Place: The Regional, the Provincial, and the Picturesque in 19th-Century Art," in *Politics of Vision* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 32.

⁵⁹ *Francisco Oller, A Realist-Impressionist: an exhibition organized by the Ponce Art Museum to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Puerto Rican painter Francisco Oller (1833-1917)* (Ponce: Museo de Arte de Ponce, 1983), discusses Oller's trips to Paris and his adaptation of Realism and Impressionism, as well as discusses his work with regards to Puerto Rican nationalism, slavery, independence, and public education.

⁶⁰ Unlike Colombia, Puerto Rico was not liberated from Spanish rule until 1898; however, when the Spanish-American War broke out, Puerto Rico's autonomy again fell in the hands of another governing power, this time to the United States.

⁶¹ Although Nochlin mentions "the genuine dilemma" with which peripheral artists were faced, primarily "...the need to adhere to the codes of the mainstream versus the desire to create a sense of national and personal identity through the language of art," (Nochlin, 26) she does not discuss the consequences of such a compromise, or exactly how these differences materialized in Oller's canvas, *The Wake*.

structure of distribution of resources and management” in this exchange, and in fact, it should be considered as part of a larger network of authority.⁶² Admittedly, Richard’s argument focuses on the tensions between the center and periphery in a postmodernist context and with relation to contemporary Latin American art. But I argue that one can apply his analysis of these “networks” to the nineteenth century, a time when countries in Latin America, and Colombia in particular, depended almost entirely on the European model.

Upon Colombian artists return to Bogotá, they were no longer peripheral artists, but agents of power because of their European experience. At the same time, however, their avant-garde tastes and innovative ideas from abroad were usually received with skepticism. In this regard, Colombian artists were not only marginalized in Paris, but also in Bogotá, where they were confronted with a different kind of resistance—the traditionalism of Colombian society. The religious and political conservatism that prevailed throughout nineteenth-century Colombia determined the extent to which these artists were willing, as well as able, to push for changes in art production at home. It also accounted for their progressive transformation in painting, or lack thereof. As the biographies of these artists will reveal, their family origins, upbringings, social status, conditions of travel, financial security, and degree of government sponsorship greatly influenced the degree of their radicalization, as well as determined the extent to which they complied with or rejected the standards set forth by Colombian art institutions.

⁶² Nelly Richard, “Postmodern Decentrednesses and Cultural Periphery: The Disalignments and Realignment of Cultural Power,” in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London: The Institute of International Visual Arts, 1996), 263.

Introduction to Selected Artists:

Alberto Urdaneta

Urdaneta, one of the first Colombian artists to travel to Europe, was the son of a wealthy landowner and descendant of important military generals who had participated in the fight for Colombia's liberation. As such, Urdaneta was politically active, and a member of the conservative guerrilla group Los Mochuelos, started by his brother, Carlos María Urdaneta. Since his family owned land outside of Bogotá, Urdaneta also dedicated himself to advancing Colombia's agricultural exports. A man of many interests, Urdaneta was also one of the earliest promoters of photography, as well as an art student at the Academia Mutis, where he studied under José Celestino Figueroa. His descent from a prestigious, landowning Bogotá family provided Urdaneta with financial advantages, as well as travel opportunities, that smoothed his professional path.

Urdaneta made his first trip to France in 1865, traveling as an agricultural expert who sought to observe cattle raising practices in Normandy.⁶³ From this experience, Urdaneta published in Colombia his first journal, *El Agricultor* (1868), featuring different livestock breeds and advanced agricultural techniques. Although very little is known of Urdaneta's first trip to Paris, this experience must have had a favorable effect on him, since Urdaneta returned to this city one more time, in 1877. Urdaneta's second trip to Paris, under very different circumstances from his first, was a form of political exile and

⁶³ González, in *El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX*, 108, has suggested that Urdaneta met Paul Gavarni (1804-1866), the celebrated French caricaturist from *Le Charivari*, during his first trip to Paris.

an escape from the civil war of 1878. More importantly, however, it provided his only opportunity for an artistic pilgrimage.

Following *El Agricultor*, Urdaneta's second attempt at publishing was *El Mochuelo* (1877). Published in honor of his counter-revolutionary efforts against the liberal government in power, *El Mochuelo* was also Urdaneta's first attempt at political caricature (Fig. 6). The offensive caricatures and political message of *El Mochuelo*, however, led to Urdaneta's imprisonment that same year. Political exile forced the artist back to Paris, while the commercial exports from the haciendas, mainly wheat, corn, and potatoes, provided Urdaneta with sufficient funds to remain abroad. While artists had traditionally traveled to Paris for painting and the fine arts, Urdaneta was also interested in the social and artistic potential of the illustrated press.

Again in Paris and this time not distracted by agriculture or politics, Urdaneta studied under French painter Paul Césaire Gariot (1811-1880),⁶⁴ and also, according to many scholars, under French painter Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier (1815-1891).⁶⁵ As he pursued his studies in painting, he also established his illustrated magazine. *Los Andes* (Fig. 7), printed in Paris in 1878, was a weekly illustrated periodical and, at the time, “the only publication in Spanish with an essentially American personality and inclination in Europe.”⁶⁶ During this second sojourn, Urdaneta befriended Antonio Rodríguez, an illustrator from *Le Monde Illustré*, with whom he returned to Colombia in 1881.

⁶⁴ Urdaneta is listed as a pupil of Gariot, in H.W. Janson, *Catalogues of the Paris Salon, 1673-1881*, vol. 59 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 11.

⁶⁵ *Alberto Urdaneta: vida y obra* (Bogotá: Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, 1992), 14; Pilar Moreno de Angel, *Alberto Urdaneta* (Bogotá: Bogotá Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1972), 61; and Carmen Ortega Ricaurte, *Diccionario de Artistas en Colombia* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janes, 1979), 489.

⁶⁶ “la única publicación en español de carácter y tendencias esencialmente americanas que hay en Europa.” Moreno de Angel, 62.

Rodríguez assisted Urdaneta in the most ambitious and longest-running publication of his career, *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* (1881-1888, Fig. 8), comprised of 5 volumes and 116 numbers. In 1881, Urdaneta also established the Escuela del Grabado and, in 1884, the photographic society of Racines y Cia. Two years later, he helped establish the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá. He died the following year at age 42, as a result of heart disease.

Urdaneta's contributions to Colombian culture as a whole were summed up by Rafael Pombo, who in 1931 defined Urdaneta as an individual who:

not only made of Bogotá a fantastic Paris with his cultured habits, but who also was completely devoted to the accomplishment of the most diverse obligations and especially in the promotion of the Fine Arts, which was his dominant passion.⁶⁷

The most comprehensive biography on Urdaneta, written by Pilar Moreno de Angel, measured the artist's ambition by focusing on his accomplishments of 1886, mentioning the high offices he held in the military and at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, as well as his ability to organize an exhibition and continue with *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*, all in one year.⁶⁸ In addition to advancing the illustrated press and reinvigorating political caricature, Urdaneta also institutionalized art education and exhibitions. Since the literature on Urdaneta consists mainly of biographies and facsimiles of his drawings, caricatures, and publications, I provide more critical analysis, in the following chapters, that allows greater understanding of Urdaneta's roles as both an educator and illustrator.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ "no solo haciéndose en Bogotá un fantástico Paris con sus hábitos de fruición culta, sino desviviéndose en el cumplimiento de las mas varias obligaciones, y sobre, todo, en el fomento de las Bellas Artes, que eran su pasión predominante." Rafael Pombo, "Alberto Urdaneta," *El Gráfico*, no. 1041 (August 8, 1931): n.p.

⁶⁸ Moreno de Angel, 156.

⁶⁹ Even the contents of the most recent publication on Urdaneta, *Alberto Urdaneta: vida y obra* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1992), were almost entirely biographical, offering little critical analysis of his art.

Epifanio Garay

The next artist to travel abroad was Garay. Garay was born in 1849, four years after Urdaneta, to painter Narciso Garay and Dolores Caicedo de Garay. While Garay took his first art lessons from his father, he also pursued an opera-singing career, traveling throughout Colombia with the *Compañía de Zarzuela*. In 1874, he traveled to New York to study singing at the Academy of Music, having briefly exhibited his paintings at the *Exposición Conmemorativa de la Independencia*, organized by Santiago Gutiérrez.⁷⁰ In 1877, Garay returned to Bogotá as a result of his father's death. As he continued with his singing career, he also advanced in painting, perhaps in hopes of creating a legacy for his father. In 1881, at the *Academia Gutiérrez*, Garay again exhibited his work, this time winning a government scholarship to travel to Europe in 1882.

In Paris, Garay enrolled at the popular *Académie Julian*. He exhibited works at the school as well as at the prestigious *Salon of the Société des Artistes Français*.⁷¹ Unfortunately, Garay's trip was cut short due to civil war and he was forced to return to Bogotá in 1885. Upon his return, Garay settled in Cartagena, where he completed his first major commission, a portrait of his strongest supporter, President Rafael Núñez (Fig. 9). This canvas, which was praised in 1898 by the critic of *La Crónica* for its stable composition, rich palette, and large size, is characteristic of Garay's portraiture.⁷² In fact,

⁷⁰ The Academy of Music was founded in 1854 in New York City. It was located on 14th Street, between 3rd Avenue and Irving Place, but was demolished in 1926.

⁷¹ According to the Archives of the *Académie Julian*, preserved at the Archives nationales, Paris, Epifanio Garay is listed as Stephan Garay, a resident of Bogotá, Colombia, and enrolled at the *Académie Julian* from 1882 to 1884, under the pupillage of William-Adolphe Bouguereau at 31 rue du Dragon.

⁷² "Salón Garay," n.p.

it was Garay's political connections with the Regeneración that scored him commissions to paint portraits of the movement's principal leaders, including Núñez, and which established his career as a portraitist of the social and governing elite. In Cartagena, Garay also established the Instituto Musical y de Bellas Artes, a small art school that combined his interest in music and painting and was supported by the president and literary writer Concepción Jiménez de Araujo.⁷³

Since Panama formed part of the United States of Colombia and was the homeland of Garay's wife, Mercedes Díaz, he moved his family to Panama City where they remained until 1893, when he was offered a directorship at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá. In a letter to his friend Pedro Carlos Manrique, Garay stipulated the terms under which he would return to Bogotá as director of the Academy. Garay noted:

The salary that I make should not be very far from what they today pay the other professors. The government should pay the expenses of my trip from Panama to Bogotá with my family and in recognition that I travel on official business matter... The government should also pay for the cost of models and set apart a small sum of money to reward distinguished students.⁷⁴

Already a successful portraitist and Paris-trained artist, Garay believed that he was entitled to make these demands. Indeed, it was his European training that had furthered his reputation in Bogotá and that in turn made him a desirable candidate for the recently established Escuela de Bellas Artes.

⁷³ For an extended discussion of Garay's residency in Cartagena, see *Epifanio Garay en Cartagena* (Cartagena: Museo de Arte Moderno de Cartagena, 1988).

⁷⁴ "El sueldo que yo gane no debe estar muy lejos del que hoy se paga a los otros profesores que hay. El Gobierno debe pagarme los gastos del viaje de Panamá a Bogotá con mi familia y en atención a que voy con cierto carácter oficial... Debe, además pagar los gastos de modelos y destinar una pequeña suma para recompensar a los alumnos que se distinguen." Epifanio Garay, Panama, to Pedro Carlos Manrique, Bogotá, January 26, 1890, transcript in the hand of Epifanio Garay, Private Collection; available from http://juliomanrique.com/abuelos/5_EPIFANIO_GARAY.html

From 1893 to 1898, Garay alternated between positions as professor and director of the Academy, before it was shut down during the Thousand Days War (1899-1902). Garay died in 1903, shortly after the end of the war and the reopening of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. As a portraitist, Garay was a traditionalist, providing an alternative to the more avant-garde portraits painted by Acevedo Bernal and Santa María. After his trip to Paris and toward the end of his career, however, Garay became more experimental. This transition can be seen in his return to the subject of the nude and in the casual depictions he created of his friends and fellow painters, discussed in the following chapter. While Garay's reputation was certainly merited, his ascension as an established portraitist was facilitated by the close ties he shared with the conservative regime of the Regeneración, and by the desire of its figureheads to be portrayed by him.

Since Garay's artistic taste remained fairly conservative, he stands in contrast to the other painters considered here, who favored and adopted the techniques of Impressionism. In fact, during the 1930s, while the last vestiges of "realism" and "tradition" were quickly dissipating in Colombia in favor of abstract and modern painting, renowned painter and critic Coriolano Leudo (1886-1957) remembered with nostalgia the academism of Garay and his followers:

At this hour in which we pretend to admire here the monstrous art based on the deformity of nature, it is very healthy to know or remember the efforts of the chosen ones, who with inspiration and patience converted art into a divine religion, dedicating their best hours to rigorous study and burning their own hearts in the sacred fire of eternal beauty.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ "En esta hora en que se pretende exaltar aquí un arte monstruoso basado en la deformación de la naturaleza, es muy saludable conocer o recordar el esfuerzo de los elegidos inspirados y pacientes que hicieron del arte una religión divina, consagraron sus mejores horas al estudio severo y quemaron su propio corazón en el fuego sagrado de la eternal belleza." Coriolano Leudo, "Epifanio Garay," in *Iniciación de una guía de arte colombiano publicada por la Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes* (Bogotá: Imprenta nacional, 1934), 135.

By posing Garay's work against the "monstrous art" and "deformity of nature," of abstract painting, Leudo defined Garay as being a traditional and academic painter and one of the earliest professional artists in Colombia. Garay's professionalism was also noted by Marta Traba, who defined him as "the first painter who knows his academic duty, meaning, his duty to paint according to the rules of light, composition, design, mix of colors . . . the way no one had ever dominated this in Colombia."⁷⁶ As a painter, but most importantly as director and educator of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Garay was remembered for his professional standards, which were reflected in the changes he instituted at the Academy.

Francisco Antonio Cano

Cano, an admirer of Garay and—like him, descended from artisans—also traveled to Paris on a government-sponsored trip. Both Cano and Garay embody a transformation that took place in the late nineteenth century from artisan to artist. While Cano's father was dedicated to silverwork, painting, and carpentry, his brother, José Ignacio Cano Cardona, was a sculptor. Cano was born in 1865 in Yarumal, a small town with little artistic heritage located in the region of Antioquia. He began working as a jeweler and illustrator before his first major breakthrough in 1874 with the magazine *El Aficionado*, which was illustrated and written by hand. Eager to succeed in publishing, Cano traveled to Medellín, the capital city of the region of Antioquia, both in 1874 and 1884. Interested

⁷⁶ "el primer pintor que sabe su oficio académico, es decir, su oficio sometido a reglas de luz, composición, diseño, mezclas de colores...como nadie lo había dominado en Colombia." Marta Traba, *Historia abierta del arte colombiano* (Cali: La Tertulia, 1974; reprint, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1984), 74 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

in illustrations and in working for periodicals, Cano felt he needed to travel to Bogotá, where Urdaneta had established the Escuela del Grabado and had launched his ambitious publication, *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*. Unable to reach Bogotá due to transportation constraints during the war, Cano briefly studied at the Academia Luna, where he focused primarily on painting. He also practiced drawing and sculpture, creating a bust of Simón Bolívar in 1883.

By the age of twenty-one, Cano was an established portraitist and professor in Antioquia, exhibiting regularly and successfully in Medellín. In 1896, he married María Sanin and joined the editorial board of the periodical, *El Repertorio Ilustrado*. That same year, Cano was awarded a government scholarship to study in Paris; however, this trip was not realized until two years later. In 1897, when Cano finally arrived in Bogotá, he visited Garay's studio and was entrusted with his first major commission: to paint the portraits of former Presidents Rafael Núñez and Carlos Holguín. Cano's visit to Garay's studio was logical, since Garay was the most famous portrait painter of the period, and since Cano was an admirer of Garay's work. One can easily see this in Cano's *The Artist Studio* (1888) where Garay's celebrated painting *Recreation* is reproduced (Fig. 10).⁷⁷ From Bogotá, Cano traveled to Paris in 1897. Unable to register at the École des Beaux-Arts as he was too old, Cano instead enrolled at the Académie Julian and later at the Académie Colarossi.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Cano's admiration for Garay changed after his trip to Paris. By the early twentieth century, after Cano returned from Paris and was already an established artist in Bogotá, he began critiquing, in a constructive manner, the work of his contemporaries, including the work of Garay and Santa María. This role reversal from mentee to critic demonstrates how Paris endowed these painters with a sense of security and prestige that not only advanced their careers in Colombia, but also created hierarchical relations among Colombian painters.

⁷⁸ According to the Archives of the Académie Julian, preserved at the Archives nationales, Paris, Francisco A. Cano registered under Jean Paul Laurens and Benjamin Constant at 63 Rue Monsieur le Prince, from July 11, 1898 to January 11, 1899, and again from January 30 to February 6, 1899.

Cano's trip to Paris was completed under less than ideal circumstances and with a modest budget. Rafael Pombo had intervened on Cano's behalf when he urged the Colombian government to grant Cano and another artist, José Eugenio Montoya (1860-1922), scholarships to go to Europe. He pleaded that they be given "a more liberal and secure budget than what some victims of our terrible generosity have received in their first and only pension payment."⁷⁹ Cano benefitted from Pombo's plea to be granted a more "generous" budget, as well as from the support of Carlos E. Restrepo, who, like him, was also a resident of the region of Antioquia. In the numerous letters that Cano sent from Paris to Restrepo in Medellín, dated from March 19, 1899 to July 6, 1899, Cano continuously expressed his gratitude toward Restrepo for having helped him with the scholarship to study abroad. In these letters, and particularly in the June 5, 1899 correspondence, Cano also mentioned the frustration and pressure he felt in having to complete numerous portrait commissions, religious paintings, and copies of European paintings for extra money.⁸⁰ Though he had received the government scholarship, it apparently was not enough to cover all of his expenses, forcing him to seek alternative forms of income.

Also in the June 5, 1899 letter, Cano shared with Restrepo stories of his Parisian experience and updates on current events, like the recent death of French President Félix Faure (1841-1899) and the ongoing Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906). In response to these

⁷⁹ "un presupuesto más liberal y seguro que el de algunas víctimas de nuestra terrible generosidad de primera y única cuota de pension." Rafael Pombo, "El pintor antioqueño," *El Siglo* (May 1897): n.p.

⁸⁰ Cano's strong commitment to expediency can be seen in the length it took him to complete two commissioned portraits. These portraits, first mentioned in this letter of June 5, 1899 (Francisco A. Cano, Paris, to Carlos E. Restrepo, Medellín, June 5, 1899, transcript in the hand of Francisco A. Cano, Archives of Carlos E. Restrepo, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín), were completed by the time he wrote his next correspondence to Restrepo, just one month later on July 6, 1899 (Francisco A. Cano, Paris, to Carlos E. Restrepo, Medellín, July 6, 1899, transcript in the hand of Francisco A. Cano, Archives of Carlos E. Restrepo, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín).

events, Cano stated, “And I never see or have seen any of this; my time has passed in studying, perhaps unfruitfully, and in lamenting the absence of my country and the little hope that I have that its future will soon change in a favorable manner.”⁸¹ As understood from this passage, Cano took his studies in Paris very seriously, however it is unlikely that he would have not known about these two major scandals, the death of President Faure in the hands of his young mistress and the wrongful accusation of Captain Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935). In considering the context in which this statement was made, in a letter addressed to his patron, Cano may have exaggerated the extent to which he was disconnected from current events so as not to appear ungrateful and careless.

Despite these feelings of indebtedness, which Juan Camilo Escobar Villegas and Santiago Londoño Vélez have cited as reasons for why Cano remained distant from the French avant-garde, there also exists countering evidence.⁸² In Cano’s travel notebook, inside of which are sketches and notes is a list of numbers, names, and titles.⁸³ Believed to have been of no real significance, the numbers, I recently realized, correspond to specific works exhibited at the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts of 1898. Referring to the statue of Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Cano wrote down the number 150, which corresponds to the number listed in the exhibition catalogue.⁸⁴ Further, Cano not only wrote down the works that intrigued him,

⁸¹ “Y yo nada de esto veo ni he visto; mi tiempo se me ha ido en estudiar, quizá infructuosamente, y en lamentar la ausencia de mi patria y la poca esperanza que tengo que ella llegue pronto a cambiar de un modo favorable a su porvenir.” Francisco A. Cano, Paris, to Carlos E. Restrepo, Medellín, June 5, 1899, transcript in the hand of Francisco A. Cano, Archives of Carlos E. Restrepo, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín.

⁸² Escobar Villegas, 59-60; and Londoño Vélez, *Mano luminosa: vida y obra de Francisco Antonio Cano*, 65.

⁸³ Francisco A. Cano, *Apuntes de Viaje: Medellín, Paris 1897-1899*, ed. Dario Jaramillo Agudelo (Bogotá: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004): np.

⁸⁴ *Exposition nationale des beaux-arts* (Paris: E. Bernard et Cie, Imprimeurs-Éditeurs, 1898): LI.

but he also recorded his impressions and information about the scandals that surrounded certain works of art, like *Balzac*. These notes demonstrate the extent to which Cano was aware of the Parisian avant-garde, contrary to what other scholars have suggested.

Like Garay, whose government scholarship was terminated because of civil unrest, Cano was also forced, in 1901, to return to Medellín. For many Colombian artists, including Pedro Carlos Manrique and Salvador Moreno, to name but a few, traveling to Europe on government scholarship was a common way to travel, but these scholarships were limited in number, prone to cancellation, and often did not provide adequate financial support while abroad. Forced to produce copies of paintings and execute portraits in order to remain financially afloat, Cano also dedicated himself to study, determined to uphold the requirements of his scholarship, maintain his commitment to Restrepo, and give back to his country.

In Medellín, Cano reopened his studio and immediately began importing gesso copies of antique sculpture and other materials from Europe. In 1904, he helped establish the Instituto de Bellas Artes de Medellín, along with many of his former pupils, most notably the sculptor Marco Tobón Mejía (1876-1933), with whom he collaborated on the illustrated and serial publication *Lectura y Arte* (1903-1906). Perhaps inspired by Cano's trip abroad, Tobón Mejía also traveled to France, where he settled permanently in Paris and also enrolled at the Académie Julian, from 1908 to 1909. Cano was not only an influential artist and educator, but also an important art critic. *Notas artísticas*, a compilation of Cano's critical writings on artists and art, demonstrates his tolerance of

new styles, like Impressionism, and with regards to controversial artists, like Santa María.⁸⁵

Like Garay, Cano progressed as an artist in large part due to government sponsorship and with the help of patrons who were part of the governing elite. Carlos E. Restrepo, president of the Republic from 1910 to 1914, was an influential figure throughout Cano's career, and as extant correspondence indicates, a major force behind his trip to Paris.⁸⁶ During Restrepo's presidency, Cano was named director of the Litografía Nacional and then professor of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. In 1923 he was promoted to director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, where he served until 1927, when Roberto Pizano (1896-1931), who had just returned from Europe, replaced him. Even after his directorship, Cano continued to teach sculpture at the Academy. He also painted numerous portraits, as well as religious and historical commissions, until his death in 1935.

Ricardo Acevedo Bernal

While Garay and Cano received government scholarships to fund their trips abroad, Acevedo Bernal supported himself in his travels to both the United States and France. He also traveled without the support of a family inheritance (a luxury that had

⁸⁵ Francisco A Cano, *Notas artísticas*, ed. Miguel Escobar Calle (Medellín: Extension Cultural Departamental, 1987).

⁸⁶ The Archives of Carlos E. Restrepo, preserved at the Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, contain many of the letters that Cano sent to Restrepo, during and after the artist's trip to Paris, demonstrating the close and long-lasting friendship between the two.

afforded Urdaneta, among others, the opportunity to travel outside of Colombia). Born in Bogotá in 1867, two years after Cano, Acevedo Bernal studied briefly at the Colegio San Bartolomé and later under renowned painter Pantaleón Mendoza (1855-1910). The latter had been a pupil of Urdaneta and had also studied in Spain. Since only one monograph has been published on Acevedo Bernal, little is known of his family, childhood, and life, except that he was an adventurer as a nomadic and struggling artist.⁸⁷ Acevedo Bernal, himself, admitted the difficulty of his own condition. In 1923, when asked by G. Pérez Sarmiento if he had ever been sent abroad by the Colombian government, he candidly responded:

Never. Many artists have studied abroad and have been pensioned by our government, such as Pantaleón Mendoza, Cano, Garay, Moros Archila and Ramírez. I have completed my trips to Europe and the United States with my own effort and I have never benefitted from official support.⁸⁸

In 1890, when Acevedo Bernal first traveled abroad, he set sail to New York City. He spent five years making a living by working with Swedish artist Normann (also spelled Norhmann), who Acevedo Bernal recalled as “a Swede whom I met in the United States, always drunk and extremely bohemian, but with a marvelous creative potential.”⁸⁹ With Acevedo Bernal’s presence in New York thus confirmed, Carmen Ortega Ricaurte has speculated that Acevedo Bernal took classes at the Art Students League in New York,

⁸⁷ Luis Alberto Acuña, *R. Acevedo Bernal* (Bogotá: Cromos, 1960).

⁸⁸ “Nunca. En el exterior han hecho sus estudios, pensionados por nuestro gobierno, muchos otros artistas como Pantaleón Mendoza, Cano, Garay, Moros, Archila y Ramírez. Yo he hecho mis viajes a Europa y Estados Unidos por mi propio esfuerzo y nunca he contado con el apoyo oficial.” G. Pérez Sarmiento, “Ricardo Acevedo Bernal,” *Cromos*, no. 360 (June 1923): 375.

⁸⁹ “un sueco con quien me encontré en los Estados Unidos, borracho como una uva y bohemio como los gatos, pero de una potencia creadora maravillosa.” Samuel Velásquez Botero, “Entrevistas de *El Gráfico*: con Acevedo Bernal,” *El Gráfico* 23, no. 226 (March 13, 1915): 610.

where he was a student of American Impressionist painter William Merritt Chase (1849-1916).⁹⁰ In an interview of 1928, in which Acevedo Bernal talked about how he made a living painting flowers “on horrible copper tables, that at the time were in vogue,” the interviewer, Adolfo Samper, mentioned that Acevedo Bernal’s obligations meant he could only study on Sundays, although “he never misses an opportunity to observe everything. He always carries with him a drawing book and makes sketches, physiological notes, down the street, in the trams.”⁹¹ Despite financial limitations that dictated a busy work schedule, Acevedo Bernal continued drawing and expanding his artistic curiosity.

Upon his return to Bogotá in 1898, Acevedo Bernal began teaching with *neocostumbrista* painter Domingo Moreno Otero (1882-1948) at the Instituto San Luis. According to Londoño Vélez, Acevedo Bernal could not sustain himself financially through teaching and was forced to make a living by “attending to a clientele, like Francisco A. Cano, that demanded portraits on the basis of oral descriptions or photographs, and that caused him to produce works of fluctuating quality.”⁹² Since the majority of Acevedo Bernal’s portraits were commissioned and often done “on the basis of oral descriptions or photographs,” they were usually considered secondary to the “grand” portraiture of Garay. This is just one example of how Colombian artists, like Acevedo Bernal, were sometimes versatile artists, not by choice, but by necessity.

⁹⁰ Ortega Ricaurte, 14.

⁹¹ “en unas horribles mesitas de cobre, que estaban entonces muy en boga... no pierde ocasión de observarlo todo. Lleva siempre un carnet de dibujo y hace croquis, apuntes de fisonomías, por la calle, en los tranvías.” Adolfo Samper, “Acevedo Bernal,” Especial para *Universidad* (April 14, 1928): 315.

⁹² “atendiendo una clientela que, como a Francisco A. Cano, llegaba a exigirle retratos a partir de descripciones habladas o de fotografías, lo llevó a producir obras de calidad dispareja.” Santiago Londoño Vélez, *Arte colombiano: 3,500 años* (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 2003), 206.

Despite financial restrictions, Acevedo Bernal established, in 1901, a small art studio like Urdaneta, Garay, and Cano before him. Although Urdaneta had founded the official arts academy in Colombia, it was customary among these early travelers to establish small art studios or academies, either in their native regions (Medellín in the case of Cano) or adopted homes (as Garay did in Cartagena). The establishments of these art studios, which were based on the Académie Julian model, reflect the importance that their trips to Paris held, not only for the artists themselves, but also for their native regions and the country at large. At the age of 35 in 1902, Acevedo Bernal began his first directorship at the Escuela de Bellas Artes.

In 1903, when he traveled to Paris, he was an established artist and educator.⁹³ His trip must have been self-funded, since he had no help from either the government or the Escuela de Bellas Artes. On October 23, 1905, two years after his arrival in Paris, Acevedo Bernal enrolled at the Académie Julian, an art studio that by the turn of the century had become a common destination for Colombian artists, as well as for Latin American artists.⁹⁴ During the eight years Acevedo Bernal was in Europe, he did quite a bit of traveling, which led Luis Alberto Acuña to postulate that he studied with Spanish Impressionist painter Joaquín Sorrolla y Bastida (1863-1923) while in Italy.⁹⁵ In 1911, when Acevedo Bernal returned to Bogotá, he resumed his post as director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes where he was also professor of painting. He returned to Europe in 1929, where he served as consul in Rome, and died one year later.

⁹³ It is not clear why Acevedo Bernal traveled to Paris at this time. Presumably it was for the educational opportunities, art museums, and to gain exposure to the bustling art scene of Paris rather than to advance his career since he already held the highest position within the Escuela de Bellas Artes.

⁹⁴ According to the Archives of the Académie Julian, preserved at the Archives nationales, Paris, Ricardo Acevedo Bernal enrolled from October 23, 1905 to April 23, 1906, under Lefebvre and Fleury at rue Fromentin. The registration of Moreno, Bolívar, Gaviria, Manrique, and Tobon Mejia can also be found at these same Archives of the Académie Julian.

⁹⁵ Acuña, 8.

In between trips, Acevedo Bernal married twice, first to Blanca Tenorio and then to Rosa Biester. During this time, he also managed to raise a family, often placing their needs aside in order to pursue his studies and travels. Unlike Garay's and Cano's trips, which were funded by the government, and were thus attached with serious expectations and requirements, Acevedo Bernal traveled freely, interacting with random and "bohemian" people, such as Normann, with whom Garay, for example, would have never crossed paths. His peripatetic lifestyle, which took him to the United States, France, and Italy, despite his lack of government funding, suggests his willingness to take risks. As an artist who did not receive many accolades or support from his country, but who nevertheless persevered, Acevedo Bernal was surely an influence to future Colombian artists who found themselves in a similarly insecure situation.⁹⁶

Andrés de Santa María

Santa María, born in Bogotá and educated in Europe, was raised in a privileged and international environment, and as such, stands in sharp contrast to the other artists of this study, namely Garay, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal. While Urdaneta also came from a wealthy and elite Colombian family, Santa María's upbringing was more cosmopolitan, since his father occupied consular positions abroad. Born in 1860, Santa María was the only son of Andrés de Santa María Rovira and Manuela Hurtado Diaz. In 1862, at age two, Santa María went to London, Brussels, and Paris with his family. Many years later

⁹⁶ Although Acevedo Bernal received distinctions at the exhibitions of 1899 and 1910 in Bogotá, and was sent by the Colombian government on a diplomatic mission to Rome in 1929, he was never as popular with the critics or as well-received by the governing elite as Garay, Cano, or Santa María were.

after the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), in 1873, the family settled permanently in Paris. From 1878 to 1880, Santa María's father served as the business liaison between France and Colombia.

Although his father pressed him to pursue a career in banking, Santa María chose, after his father's death in 1882, to be a painter. That same year, Santa María enrolled at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, where he studied under Jacques Ferdinand Humbert (1842-1934) and Henri Gervex (1852-1929).⁹⁷ According to the registry of foreign students at the *École*,⁹⁸ Santa María was the only Colombian artist there, a testament to both the exclusivity of this arts institution, and to Santa María's ties to bureaucrats, who helped him secure his position at the *École*.⁹⁹ Here, Santa María came into contact with foreign artists such as the Spanish painter Ignacio Zuloaga (1870-1945), as well as with dignitaries such as Prince Eugén of Sweden (1865-1947), who was also a distinguished artist. By 1887, Santa María had already exhibited at the Salon of the *Société des Artistes Français*, something he would continue to do for a number of years, and, by 1902, he had participated in the Salon of the *Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts*.

⁹⁷ The earliest mention of J.F. Humbert and H. Gervex as Santa María's instructors can be found in, André de Ridder, *Andrés de Santa María* (Brussels: Editions de la Bascule, 1937), 82-83, in *Andrés de Santa María: nuevos testimonios, nueva visión*, eds. Jorge Gómez y Cáceres and Carolina Ponce de León (Bogotá: Banco de la Republica, 1989). This is the only biography on Santa María published during his lifetime and written with his assistance.

⁹⁸ The Archives of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, preserved at the Archives nationales, Paris, contain the names of foreign artists who enrolled at the institution from 1878 to 1902. Among these names, Santa María is the only Colombian artist, however there are many artists from Mexico, Brazil, and Chile, and a few from Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador. The majority of these Latin American artists entered the *École*, like Santa María, through diplomatic or consular recommendations.

⁹⁹ Representative of the Legación de los Estados Unidos de Colombia, Paris, to Director of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, December 11, 1882, transcript in the hand of the representative from the Legación de los Estados Unidos de Colombia, Archives of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, Archives nationales, Paris.

In Paris, Santa María, more than any other Colombian painter of the period, came closest to experiencing all that Paris had to offer in the form of art institutions and exhibition opportunities. His elite status afforded him access to France's most exclusive art institution, the *École*, and since he was not encumbered by government sponsorship, the need to support himself financially, nor preoccupied with a nationalist agenda, he was free to experiment in a variety of styles. I emphasize this distinction between Santa María and the other selected artists because such differences would significantly affect the personality and artistic development of any artist. Santa María developed as a painter devoted solely to his art, and detached from any financial worry or territorial bond. In fact, Santa María's experiences in Paris were closer to those of a French painter than a Colombian.

In 1893, Santa María married a cousin, Amalia Bidwell Hurtado, and moved with her to Colombia. After having been away from his native country for thirty-one years, he began teaching at the *Escuela de Bellas Artes*, under Garay's directorship. After six years when the Academy closed for the Thousand Days War, however, Santa María returned to Paris. Despite having gone largely unnoticed as an artist during his years in Colombia, he returned when the *Escuela de Bellas Artes* reopened in 1903. He served as professor and then, in 1904, became director.¹⁰⁰ Santa María's constant travel back and forth between Europe and Colombia is perhaps indicative of the ambiguities he surely felt as a result of his dual nationalism.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Santa María served as director of the *Escuela de Bellas Artes* until 1910.

¹⁰¹ Santa María's dual nationalism is explored in greater detail in the following chapter and especially in regards to one particular painting, *The Gleaners* (1895), which encapsulates the complexity of this cross-cultural exchange.

Despite his overseas artistic achievements and the progressive changes that he instituted at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Santa María endured criticism during his last years as director of the Academy. In 1911, following the Centenario de la Independencia exhibition, Santa María left Colombia permanently, demonstrating the extent to which these criticisms bothered him.¹⁰² Once back in Europe, Santa María's success was again evident as he exhibited along with Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and Maurice Utrillo (1883-1955) at the Galerie Bernheim in Paris in 1917, and three years later was declared a member of the Société des Artistes Français. In 1923, he received the highest honor in France, the *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur*. Due to the events of World War I and his wife's family ties to London, Santa María traveled between France, Spain, and England, before settling permanently in Brussels, where he died in 1945. Although he spent less than twenty years in Colombia, he had been an influential force during the earliest and most decisive years of the Academy.

The literature on Santa María is extensive, beginning with his contemporaries, Max Grillo (1868-1949) and Baldomero Sanín Cano (1861-1957), who were the first to praise his work and categorize him as an Impressionist.¹⁰³ In 1932, Duque Uribe identified Santa María as a Colombian national, rather than a European painter, and praised his work during a lecture held at the Escuela de Bellas Artes. In 1968, Eugenio Barney Cabrera, in opposition to Marta Traba, defined Santa María's work as aristocratic, arguing against the victimization of Santa María by his contemporary critics and suggesting that Santa María "was not condemned to unpopularity," but rather that he

¹⁰² In Chapter 4, I discuss in more depth the circumstances that led to Santa María's departure from Colombia, as well as the reasons for why the critics resisted his progressive views on art.

¹⁰³ Baldomero Sanin Cano, in "El Impresionismo en Bogotá," *Revista contemporánea* 1, no. 2 (November 1904): 145-156, was one of the earliest critics to publicly define and address the issues of Impressionism, and explain them to a wider audience.

never pretended to be popular.¹⁰⁴ In 1974, Marta Traba published *Historia abierta del arte colombiano*, in which she resuscitated Santa María and elevated him to the international stature of Venezuelan artist Armando Reverón (1889-1954) and Uruguayan painter Pedro Figari (1861-1938).¹⁰⁵ After Traba solidified Santa María's role as the first modernist in Colombia, other scholars followed, primarily Eduardo Serrano and Beatriz González.

During the 1980's and '90s a number of scholars further expounded upon Santa María's reputation, citing numerous exhibitions and catalogues, both in Colombia and Europe.¹⁰⁶ In 1989, for example, the exhibition "Andrés de Santa María: nuevos testimonios, nueva visión," expanded upon Serrano's 1971 publication *Andrés de Santa María*, by placing particular emphasis on the artist's largely forgotten later work. These publications, and particularly a later publication by Serrano, *Andrés de Santa María: pintor colombiano de resonancia universal* (1989), have argued that Santa María should not only be considered to be an Impressionist but an Expressionist as well. These numerous publications and exhibitions are a testament to the extensive and growing literature on Santa María, but they also serve as a reminder of the scholarship that awaits for the other artists selected in this investigation.

¹⁰⁴ "no estuvo condenado a la impopularidad." Eugenio Barney Cabrera, "Andrés de Santamaría y su época," in *Temas para la historia del arte colombiano* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1970), 166.

¹⁰⁵ Traba, "Problemas de influencias, de universalismo y localismo, de técnicas y de significados en la obra de Andrés de Santamaría," in *Historia abierta del arte colombiano*, 87-114 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹⁰⁶ Eduardo Serrano, in *Andrés de Santa María: pintor colombiano de resonancia universal* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1988); and Beatriz Gonzalez, in *Andrés de Santa María (1860-1945): un precursor solitario* (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 1998) have made the greatest contribution to the scholarship on Santa María, providing a detailed biography on the artist and a complete registry of Santa María's work, as well as archival research and critical analysis. The Musée Marmottan exhibition and resultant catalogue of the same name, *Andrés de Santa María, 1860-1945* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 1985), demonstrated Santa María's international appeal.

These studies of Santa María have aggrandized him at the expense of other artists. That Santa María was the only Colombian artist of the nineteenth century to have had a solo exhibition in France during his lifetime further contributes to his elevated status.¹⁰⁷ Although Santa María's singularity merits attention, for the purposes of this investigation I have found it more fruitful to consider the bigger picture—that is, the range of artists that collectively shaped the direction of Colombian art during its most defining moments.

Gaining an understanding of the details of the lives and personalities of these artists, as well as their experiences in Europe provide a more three-dimensional context in which to view their works. This is furthered when one also considers the art historical traditions from which these artists participated and departed, as well as of those they later influenced. After traversing political, personal, and financial hurdles back home, their arrival in Paris was an accomplishment in and of itself. The only remaining challenge was their integration into French life, which as the next two chapters will reveal, was particularly difficult in a society that not only knew very little of Colombian culture, but often expressed prejudices regarding these artists' abilities to excel.

¹⁰⁷ *Andrés de Santa María Retrospective* (Bruxelles: Palais des Beaux-Art, 1936).

Chapter 2

In Paris

Many of the Colombian artists discussed in the previous chapter, including Urdaneta, Cano, Manrique, Gaviria, Montoya, and Bolívar, left their country for the first time when they traveled to Paris. Full of aspirations, and perhaps somewhat anxious anticipation, they were unprepared for the prejudices that they would encounter overseas. Little was known of Colombia in France or anywhere in Europe, with the exception of Spain. Colombia lacked an international identity; its citizens abroad thus functioned as important cultural diplomats and key players in representing their country abroad. This demand for them to represent their country overseas also meant that Colombia needed to

cultivate a sense of national pride, first internally and then externally. Through the establishment of national institutions and exhibitions, and through participation in international exhibitions, Colombia tried to shape an image of itself and its people; however, when these efforts were disrupted by civil unrest and political instability, the weight of representing Colombia abroad fell on the shoulders of its travelers.

In addition to the demands of functioning, however informally, as cultural envoys, many of these artists had further requirements by the Colombian government to produce large quantities of art works, as they were pensioned travelers. Since the majority of Colombian artists were barred, as foreigners, from enrolling in the official and long-established *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, they instead registered in the newly formed and independent art studios of the city, particularly the *Académie Julian*. Focusing mainly on their educations but also on their social experiences in Paris, this chapter explores how Colombian artists experienced Paris and its art institutions. Through a close reading of the stylistic and thematic transformations found in their individual *oeuvres*, I will demonstrate how each artist reached some sort of turning point in Paris, and that these turning points, in turn, affected the development of Colombian art.

Some Colombian artists were drawn to Paris because of what Frédéric Martínez has termed the “ ‘syndrome of the ‘French Europe.’ ”¹ Since Europe was culturally defined, in large part, by trends set in France, Colombian travelers, and particularly those who came from Creole families who spoke French, desired to go where there were no language barriers. As Martínez conjectured:

¹ “ ‘syndrome de una Europa Francesa.’ ” Frédéric Martínez, *El nacionalismo cosmopolita: la referencia europea en la construcción nacional en Colombia 1845-1900* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 2001), 234.

How could they not feel at home in France, when they were so aware of its literature and political events through reading and debate? The attraction of Paris therefore consisted mainly in the feeling that they had of a profound and ancient familiarity.²

Yet historians such as Martínez and Jaime Jaramillo Uribe have noted that there may have been a class component to this “ ‘syndrome of the ‘French Europe,’ ” in that it applied to the elite classes and not to all Colombians.³ Still, no matter how familiar they felt (or did not feel) with France and French culture, the Colombian artists who traveled to Paris encountered ignorance of their own culture there.

Colombian artists began to arrive in Paris in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), a time of heightened xenophobia in France. Some Colombian travelers, such as F.C. Aguilar, complained about how they were perceived by Europeans not as South Americans, but rather as “Yankees,” or Americans from North America.⁴ Aguilar also complained that in New York, London, Venice, and Paris, he was treated “...with indifference and scorn by those whom he met in the streets, hotels, steamboats, trains, and coaches.”⁵ Indeed, Angel Cuervo, in 1887, noted that “in Europe they still don’t know that we call ourselves Colombia.”⁶ Despite their strong cultural differences, Europeans perceived Colombians, Mexicans, and other Latin American nationals who shared a continent, language, and history, as essentially the same.

² “¿Cómo no imaginar sentirse en casa en Francia, cuando se ha frecuentado tanto su literatura y su actualidad política a través de la lectura y el debate? La atracción de París, por lo tanto, reside principalmente en esa sensación de una profunda y antigua familiaridad.” Ibid., 235.

³ Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, *El pensamiento colombiano en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Editorial Temis, 1964).

⁴ F. C. Aguilar, *Recuerdos de un viaje a Oriente* (Bogotá: Imprenta del Tradicionista, 1875), 40.

⁵ “...con indiferencia y desprecio por los que encontraba en calles, hoteles, vapores, ferrocarriles y coches.” Ibid., 18-19.

⁶ “En Europa, todavía no saben que nos llamamos Colombia.” Angel Cuervo, *Conversación artística* (Paris: Imprenta reunidas, 1887), 106.

Cuervo also noted that part of the reason Europeans were not fully aware of Colombia is because of the country's volatile political situation and its multiple name changes during the nineteenth century.⁷ As a result of transformations in government, and since the geographical limits of the country shifted, due to the secession of Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama, then it is partly justifiable, at least according to Cuervo, that Europeans would mistake Colombians for Venezuelans. Although these political shifts could have contributed to this misidentification of Colombian nationals, European prejudices cannot be discounted.

In France, many travel journals described Latin America as a “primitive” and untouched territory. Publications such as Jean-Baptiste Debret's *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil* (1834–1839), stereotyped Latin American indigenes as barefoot, uncivilized, and savage. Although Debret lived in Brazil and based his impressions on firsthand experience, by the late nineteenth century French artists such as Gustave Doré (1832–1883) not only were romanticizing Latin America, but literally inventing it, as in *Le Mexique Illustré* (1862). An illustration from this journal (Fig. 11) of Mexican gauchos savagely killing an Indian is an example of the sorts of inaccurate textual and visual accounts that shaped French notions of Latin American nationals, whom they generally considered an inferior and backward people.⁸

At the same time, France's imperial domination of North Africa and Southeast Asia sparked an interest among French writers and artists in the “primitive”--particularly

⁷ Gran Colombia (1821-1830), Republic of New Granada (1831-1858), Granadine Confederation (1854-1863), United States of Colombia (1863-1886) and Republic of Colombia (1886- present).

⁸ For an extended discussion of European misapprehensions of Latin America in the nineteenth century, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

pre-Colonial cultures.⁹ Even during the early twentieth century, these distant cultures continued to interest the French public. A 1928 letter from French publisher Les Editions G. Van Oest, which announced the arrival of the much-anticipated publication, *Les arts anciens de l'Amérique*, a follow-up to a very successful exhibition, demonstrates the fascination in France of so-called primitive cultures.¹⁰ These ethnographic publications, along with the travel literature and various international exhibitions devoted to indigenous peoples, demonstrate a vogue that is exemplified in the work of a number of artists such as Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) as well as certain Fauve and Cubist artists. The Cubist, Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), for example, incorporated African and Egyptian motifs into his art.¹¹

The perception of Colombia as Non-Western, and therefore a primitive, territory was perpetuated by both Europeans and Colombians. Since Colombian artists did not participate in many international exhibitions—a result of the isolationist policies of the Regeneración (1886-1899) and the outbreak of the Thousand Days War (1899-1902)—their presence in Europe was low. Even when Colombia was represented in international expositions, such as the 1878 and 1889 Expositions Universelles in Paris, the Madrid Exhibition of 1892, and the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, their exhibits were plagued by a lack of organization and funding, and by a lack of vision on the part of the organizers. Furthermore, the emphasis at these venues was on the

⁹ It is worth noting that during the nineteenth century the majority of France's colonial holdings were not in Latin America, except for French Guiana and Haiti, but rather in Africa and Asia. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Colombia and other countries in Spanish-speaking Latin America were inaccessible to most of Europe, including France, because of Spanish dominance.

¹⁰ Les Editions G. Van Oest, Paris, n.d., transcript in typed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

¹¹ For an extended discussion of primitivism, see Jack Flam and Miriam Deutsch, ed., *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

archaeological past and technologies and resources of the current times, rather than on modern and contemporary art. For the Madrid Exhibition, for example, President Vicente Restrepo—an archaeologist himself—sent seventeen boxes containing: “640 pieces of gold, 332 of copper, 755 of ceramic, 84 of stone and 21 of wood and bone.”¹² While Colombia exhibited the richness of its archeological past, it did not display many examples of Colombian fine art, except for a few colonial paintings, and rarely did it exhibit the work of its contemporary artists.¹³ The under-representation of fine art at this exhibition reinforced fairgoers’ stereotypes of a primitive Colombia.

For the Exposition Universelle of 1889 in Paris, held in celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution, Colombia was initially the only country of the Americas not included.¹⁴ This was rectified, however, when Uruguay invited Colombia to exhibit within its pavilion. Just as in the Madrid exposition, Colombia displayed pre-Colonial artifacts—gold, copper, and ceramic sculptures—along with coffee, cocoa beans, vegetables, and raw gems, such as emeralds. Like other Latin American exhibits at this exposition, the Uruguay-Colombia display was located in a corner of the exhibition’s rectangular plan, marginalized in its distance from the main attractions, including the more high-brow Fine Arts Pavilion and Galerie des Machines (Fig. 12). It was on these marginalized premises and inside the pavilion of Uruguay that

¹² “640 piezas de oro, 332 de cobre, 755 de ceramica, 84 de piedra y 21 de Madera y de hueso.” Frédéric Martínez, “¿Como representar a Colombia? De las exposiciones universales a la Exposición del Centenario, 1851-1910,” in *Museo, memoria y nación: misión de los museos nacionales para los ciudadanos del futuro*, eds. Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez and María Emma Wills Obregón (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2000), 322.

¹³ The cultural implications of this decision are examined in Chapter 3, where I discuss how the exhibition of pre-Columbian antiquities and mineral wealth, at the expense of contemporary painting, affected Colombian artists in Paris.

¹⁴ J. J. Triana, *La Colombie à l’Exposition Universelle de 1889* (Paris: Lahure, 1889), 1.

Colombia exhibited at one of the most public and well-attended events of the nineteenth century.

The exclusion and marginalization at important European expositions helped spur on a national pride movement in Colombia. In the arts this played out in the establishment of major academic and artistic institutions, such as the Universidad Nacional de los Estados Unidos de Colombia (1867), the Escuela de Bellas Artes (1886), and the Escuela Nacional de Música (1892), and through the inauguration of national exhibitions. This nationalist agenda, however, was hampered by the country's geographic insularity, civil unrest, and especially, by the Thousand Days War (1899-1902), which limited Colombia's ability to promote itself internationally. For Colombian artists abroad on federal scholarships, this meant the constant threat of losing their scholarships. Colombia did not address its international reputation until after 1891, when an organization, directed by Carlos Martínez Silva, was established for the promotion of Colombian culture abroad, and especially at the international exhibitions. Just as Martínez Silva's organization increased Colombia's visibility, the exhibited work and publications of Colombian artists were also influential in promoting Colombia's image in Paris.

National exhibitions in Colombia, which began in 1871, were intended to foster pride by highlighting the country's industrial and capitalist progress. The exhibitions also featured limited displays of recent art, including paintings by Garay as well as some colonial works (from 1548 to 1819) and certain forms of craft (such as textile weavings and woodwork). With the founding of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1886, the works of contemporary Colombian artists and their professors were restricted to national exhibitions. Even in a national setting, however, Martínez argues that the arts were considered secondary to the more important displays of technological, agricultural, and

commercial progress.¹⁵ After 1886, the Escuela de Bellas Artes addressed the issue of cultural ignorance, through the institutionalization of the arts and the professionalization of artists, and through the importation of European standards by which to measure the arts.

Whether Colombian artists studied in Europe or emulated the techniques of European painting, their acceptance in Colombia depended largely on their associations with Europe, since according to Stanton Loomis Catlin, “the [elite] classes [of Latin America] . . . looked to Europe for safe and respectable cultural values.”¹⁶ After all, the institutionalization of art, government, medicine, and law had been based on European prototypes, and, as put forth by Martínez in *El nacionalismo cosmopolita: La referencia europea en la construcción nacional en Colombia, 1845-1900*, “it was in relation to Europe that the new Hispanic American countries were established.”¹⁷ In all facets of Colombian life, but particularly in terms of culture, the European model remained at the center.

Both European-trained Colombian artists as well as those who remained at home emulated European methods. In mimicking the styles and subjects of European painting, however, these artists rejected the stories and aesthetics of their country’s pre-Hispanic past. That these European traditions were typically staid might explain why the artists who took them up have been marginalized in art historical discourse, since they represented not only a European style of painting, but a conservative one at that. This

¹⁵ Martínez, “¿Como representar a Colombia?,” 323-325.

¹⁶ Stanton Loomis Catlin, *Art of Latin America since Independence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 67.

¹⁷ “es contra Europa como se constituyen las nuevas naciones hispanoamericanas.” Martínez, *El nacionalismo cosmopolita*, 40.

process on the part of Colombian artists of European emulation was far more complex than most recent scholarship suggests, reflecting larger social and cultural forces at play.

In Paris, Colombian artists studied under European agendas and curricula which dramatically influenced the direction of Colombian art. Through the study of drawing from the human body, the nude became an accepted art form. Their exposure to new techniques and aesthetic styles, such as Impressionism and Art Nouveau, also impacted their own artistic production. In focusing on these examples and others, I will demonstrate how French assimilations, which were not always conservative, as Beatriz González and Juan Camilo Escobar Villegas argue,¹⁸ are reflected in the work of Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, Santa María, Moreno, Tobón Mejía and Carlos Valenzuela (1876-1934). For those who were hesitant to embrace the avant-garde, I will consider the reasons why they remained so deeply committed to Academic painting which emphasized tonal modeling and line drawing and idealized mythological subjects. For those who produced both Academic and modern paintings, this study will provide reasons as to why they vacillated and on whose behalf these stylistic choices were made.

Although the majority of Colombian artists enrolled at the Académie Julian, the artists they chose to emulate and the styles they adopted varied considerably. Typically the most avant-garde styles, such as Impressionism, were accepted by the artists who were the most peripatetic and independent, such as Acevedo Bernal, Valenzuela, and Santa María. Although Garay also registered at the Académie Julian, like Acevedo Bernal, his style never became so radicalized; on the other hand, he did subscribe to the European taste for the female nude. It is important to note that Colombian artists, prior to

¹⁸ Beatriz González, *El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 2004), 105-109; and Juan Camilo Escobar Villegas, ed., *Francisco Antonio Cano 1865-1935* (Medellín: Museo de Antioquia, 2003), 58.

their arrival in Europe, had never been exposed to Impressionism and rarely had seen art that celebrated nudity.¹⁹

The École des Beaux-Arts and Académie Julian

Colombian artists began arriving in Paris in 1865, at a time when serious institutional changes were taking place at the École des Beaux-Arts, and new and more independent forms of art education were emerging. The École des Beaux-Arts was established in 1648 as the teaching arm of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. In 1863, the École underwent serious pedagogical and institutional changes, including the introduction of painting and sculpture classes to the curriculum, although instruction there remained focused on line drawing.²⁰ The Prix de Rome, which had been instituted in 1663, was a scholarship awarded to the most talented history painter at the École, but due to its high difficulty level and prestige, it also came under attack and revisions were made throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century by adding new categories, such as landscape painting in 1817, which broadened the audience and made the competition more egalitarian.²¹ Despite these changes, the École continued to

¹⁹ While some of these traditions were not necessarily “progressive,” as was the case with the female nude, an age-old subject in European art, in the case of Colombian art this was a revolutionary subject and one, which entered their *oeuvre* in Paris, thus I consider it a French influence.

²⁰ See Monique Segré, *L'École des beaux-arts: XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1998) for an explanation of how the year 1863 was crucial in the history of the École because of the Salon des Refusés exhibition, which according to Segré, was the biggest breach to the authority of the Academy, ultimately leading to institutional transformations.

²¹ For more information on the subject, see Philippe Grunchev, *The Grand Prix de Rome: paintings from the École des beaux-arts, 1797-1863* (Washington, D.C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1984).

preserve its exclusivity and conservative attitudes, causing its popularity to wane, and consequently giving rise to the creation of more alternative studios.²²

Seeking the classical arts education that was offered at the *École*, Colombian artists, with the exception of Santa María, were, nevertheless denied admission because they were foreign nationals who lacked diplomatic affiliation.²³ The *École* also did not accept women (until 1897), or students younger than 15 years of age or older than 30.²⁴

Colombian artists, then, registered at independent and private art studios. At such studios, which were comprised of both private art schools and *ateliers des élèves*, Colombian artists still found a way to gain foundational training in a variety of new techniques and aesthetic styles from classical to more avant-garde.

As French artists began to question the old tenets of the *École*, a new generation of *juste milieu* painters emerged towards the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁵ These painters, Albert Boime explains:

²² Independent studios in Paris, such as the ateliers of Paul Delaroche (1797-1856) and Charles Gleyre (1806-1874), existed even before 1863, in response to artists who were not accepted into the *École*.

²³ Foreigners were presumably not accepted into the *École* until 1878, according to the Archives de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Archives nationales, Paris, which begins listing foreign students in attendance beginning in 1878. The exclusivity of the *École des Beaux-Arts* can be measured not only by the fact that Santa María—someone with an aristocratic background who had grown up in Paris—was the only Colombian artist present, but also by the small number of Latin American nationals. Those who were included were: José Sebastián Segura (Mexico), Luis Anzonera y Agrada (Mexico), Ernesto Moncayo (Ecuador), José Astega (Chile), G.B. Billa (Chile), Clemente Calderon (Peru), Joaquín Clausell (Mexico), Galíndez (Argentina), Rafael García y Sánchez Facio (Mexico), Higinio González (Chile), Nicanor González-Méndez (Chile), Miguel Miramón (Mexico), Xavier de Porto-Seguro (Chile), E. Hoynaz Sucre (Venezuela), and Alfred Valenzuela Puelna (Chile).

²⁴ Women were not accepted into the *École des Beaux-Arts* until 1897, according to J. David Farmer, "Foreword," in *Overcoming all Obstacles: The Women of the Académie Julian*, ed. Gabriel Weisberg and Jane R. Becker (New York: Dahesh Museum, 1999), xiii-xiv. Students older than 30 years old, such as Francisco A. Cano, were unable to register at the *École*, according to Escobar Villegas, ed., 47.

²⁵ Although there was an earlier generation of *juste milieu* painters, which included artists such as Thomas Couture (1815-1879), and that corresponded with the July Monarchy (1830 to 1848), in this study I am referring to the second generation of *juste milieu* painters, known as Naturalists, who emerged after the Paris Commune of 1871 and exhibited in the Salons of the 1870s and 80's.

introduced into official and academic circles such features as a lighter palette and looser, quasi-Impressionist execution...[and] at the same time, they gratified the public taste for modernism combined with traditionalism by modifying the disquieting features of Impressionism and rejecting the polished technique of the academic painters.²⁶

Artists such as Jules Bastien-Le Page and Alfred Philippe Roll were representative of the compromises made between the avant-garde and the Academy during the early stages of the Third Republic (1870-1940), when the anti-Academic attitudes of the Impressionists were controversial, but the academism of the École was also being called into question. The stylistic decisions made by second generation *juste milieu* painters, primarily the use of “a lighter palette and looser, quasi-Impressionist execution,” parallel those made by Colombian artists, who when confronted with the rise of the avant-garde and the demise of the Academic, also made similar technical and stylistic choices.

The rise of private art schools, such as the Académie Julian and Académie Colarossi, as well as independent exhibition venues led to major transformations in French art education, which had historically been controlled by the government. As Patricia Mainardi has argued, the breakdown of the official Salon led to an increase in “...commercial gallery shows... mounted by private societies and circles, and...organized by the various modernist secession groups.”²⁷ The Impressionist exhibition of 1874, organized in Nadar’s former studio at 35 boulevard des Capucines, is but one example of how crucial these alternative exhibitions were in the promotion of an independent and “modern” art. After 1880, the power of the École was further weakened by the dissolution

²⁶ Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Phaidon, 1971), 17.

²⁷ Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3.

of the Salon--which had been its official exhibition venue since the eighteenth century--and by the rise of alternative exhibition spaces, like the Salon des Indépendants in 1884.

The inaccessibility of the École to most Colombian artists forced them to seek out new venues for training and exhibition. Where each artist ultimately chose to go also depended largely on his financial circumstances. Due to these limitations, and as a result of social networking, Colombian artists registered at private art schools, such as the Académie Julian and Académie Colarossi, which were inexpensive and accessible. From 1880 to 1910, at least eight Colombian artists and a number of other Latin Americans enrolled at the Académie Julian, making this studio the most popular destination among not only Colombians but with other Latin American nationals as well.²⁸ Argentinean artists Eduardo Sívori (1847-1918) and Eduardo Schiaffino (1858-1935), for example, registered at the Académie, along with Peruvian artist Carlos Baca-Flor (1865-1941) and Venezuelan Arturo Michelena (1863-1898).²⁹ These Latin American artists, who were among the most internationally recognized of turn-of-the-century Latin American painters,³⁰ were not the only ones, however, to frequent the Académie Julian; European students, such as Spanish artist Ignacio Zuloaga and German artist Emil Nolde (1867-1956) also enrolled, as did Japanese and Russians. North Americans however, comprised

²⁸ The Archives of the Académie Julian, preserved at the Archives nationales, Paris, maintain the enrollment records of these Colombian artists, as well as those of other Latin American artists. As these registries confirm, the largest majority of Latin American artists at the Académie Julian consisted of Argentineans, Brazilians, and Chileans, demonstrating how Colombian artists were a minority even within the Latin American art community. At the École des Beaux-Arts, Santa María was the only Colombian registered between 1878 and 1902, further proving the extent to which Colombian artists were secondary to other Latin Americans.

²⁹ Other Latin American nationals from Uruguay, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Chile, and Cuba appear in the enrollment records of the Académie Julian, transcribed in *The Julian Academy, Paris 1868-1939*; and preserved in microfilm at The Archives of the Académie Julian, Archives nationales, Paris.

³⁰ The international stature of these Latin American artists is determined by their important presence in the Salons and international exhibitions in Paris (discussed in Chapter 3), and by the amount of scholarly attention that they have received posthumously (discussed in the Introduction).

the largest group of foreigners, including women artists such as Cecilia Beaux (1855-1942) and Elizabeth Jane Gardner (1837-1922), and male artists such as Charles Demuth (1883-1935) and Robert Henri (1865-1929). The other half of the student population consisted of French students, including Maurice Denis (1870-1943) and Fernand Léger (1881-1955), both of whom eventually broke away from the studio and established independent and avant-garde art circles.

The *ateliers des élèves*, which were more exclusive art studios and were run by established artists such as Carolus-Duran (1837-1917) and Léon Bonnat (1833-1922), offered both French and foreign students an art education that was not as competitive as that of the École. Whereas many U.S. artists, such as John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) and Kenyon Cox (1856-1919), who studied under Carolus-Duran, enrolled in *ateliers des élèves*, Latin American artists typically did not, since they were not as well connected as North American artists, who, having been there longer, had an established colony and numerous associations. With the exception of a handful of artists, including the Colombian Santa María, the Peruvian Francisco Laso, and the Puerto Rican artist Francisco Oller,³¹ the majority of Latin Americans enrolled in the Académie Julian.

The Académie Julian was successful as an art school largely due to the entrepreneurial efforts of its founder, Rodolphe Julian (1839-1907). Julian, who had trained under Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889) and Leon Cogniet (1794-1880) at the École des Beaux-Arts, was an experienced and established academician. Despite his numerous acceptances into the official Salons, from 1865 to 1878, his critical success was

³¹ Natalia Majluf, in “*The Creation of the Image of the Indian in 19th-Century Peru: The Paintings of Francisco Laso (1823-1869)*” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 1995) has confirmed that Francisco Laso studied under both Paul Delaroche and Charles Gleyre. Osiris Delgado Mercado, *Francisco Oller y Cestero: pintor de Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 1983) has also confirmed Oller’s pupilage under Thomas Couture and Charles Gleyre, as well as his friendship with Camille Pissarro.

limited.³² In 1868, Julian established the Académie Julian as a place where students could train for the entrance exam of the École des Beaux-Arts. In preparation for these rigorous examinations, Julian created an art studio that offered live models, exhibition opportunities, and a prestigious professoriate, including William-Adolphe Bouguereau, Jules-Joseph Lefebvre (1836-1911), and Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921). As Gabriel Weisberg states:

...his hiring such widely recognized artists indicates that Julian well understood how to attract potential clients and students without raising concerns about excessive costs. These instructors, with their own professional contacts, were in advantageous positions to introduce the . . . students to potential clients and to gain them access to exhibitions and governmental sales, thus ensuring that they were on the right track when their training was finished.³³

The school's more than ten locations throughout Paris helped to increase that much more the school's visibility.³⁴ With its increasing success, the curriculum of the school expanded and, by 1902, had night classes for men, by 1904 this was extended to women, and, in 1906, Julian began offering classes to children ranging from 10 to 15 years of age.³⁵

The success of the Académie Julian influenced the emergence of other ateliers, such as the Académie Colarossi, Académie Delécluse, and the Académie des Champs

³² Rodolphe Julian studied under Alexandre Cabanel and Leon Cogniet at the École, "...without being enrolled at the school." (*The Julian Academy, Paris 1868-1939* (New York: Shepherd Gallery, 1989), 8) According to E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs, et Graveurs* (Forand: Librairie Grund, 1951), Julian also studied under Cabanel and Cogniet, however he does not specify that it was at the École.

³³ Gabriel Weisberg, "The Women of the Académie Julian: The Power of Professional Emulation," in *Overcoming all Obstacles: The Women of the Académie Julian*, 15-16.

³⁴ See *The Julian Academy, Paris 1868-1939*, 2, for a complete list of the Académie Julian locations throughout Paris.

³⁵ Martine Hérold, *L'Académie Julian en cent ans*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (Paris: 31, rue du Dragon, n.d.), microfiche, 4-LK7-50838.

Elysées. With curricula similar to that of the Académie Julian, and with locations throughout Paris, these studios, and especially the Académie Colarossi, offered students:

...convenient right- and left- bank locations; extremely flexible admission arrangements, including terms as short as a week; tuition much lower than Julian's; and reputable critics who included Raphael Collin, Gustave Courtois, and Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret.³⁶

Cano was one of those who studied at both the Académie Julian and the Académie Colarossi; however, his registration is only recorded at the Académie Julian, perhaps reflecting the informality of enrollment and the transitory nature of his studies at the Académie Colarossi.³⁷

Though these other art studios began cropping up, it was the Académie Julian that was the primary venue of Parisian art education outside of the official École in the late nineteenth century. As an informal art studio, the Académie Julian required no entrance examination. The fees at the Académie Julian were cheaper for men than for women,³⁸ since, according to Weisberg, "it was generally believed that women would be able to find a family member or an outside sponsor who would pay their expenses."³⁹ Though a woman would have to pay more, the Académie Julian offered women the opportunity to paint from the live female nude, an element of training traditionally available to male

³⁶ H. Barbara Weinberg, "Académie Julian," in *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-century American painters and their French teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 279.

³⁷ According to Santiago Londoño Vélez, *Mano luminosa: vida y obra de Francisco Antonio Cano* (Medellín: Fondo Editorial Universidad EAFIT, 2002); and Escobar Villegas, Cano enrolled at the Académie Julian and he also frequented the Académie Colarossi.

³⁸ According to the *L'Académie Julian*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (Paris: November 1902), microfiche, D-149, men paid 25 francs for half-day classes for 4 consecutive weeks, while women paid more than twice the amount, 60 francs.

³⁹ Weisberg, 14.

students only. Moreover, it also introduced them to new exhibition and commercial opportunities.

The Académie Julian was not just a place, however, with new offerings for women. Pedro Carlos Manrique, who studied at the Académie Julian from 1882 to 1886 (at the same time as Garay), recalled the Académie Julian as the “most refined” artistic school in Paris, and described it as:

... the meeting point for painters and sculptors from all over the world who are interested in perfecting their studies, and the French youth that does not want to submit themselves to the customary teachings, conventionalisms, and rancid traditions of the National School of Fine Arts. English, Russians, Australians, Japanese, Chinese, Argentineans, there is no region in the world, one can be sure, that does not have a representative in any one of these studios, where they go to study the nude and composition, guided by prominent masters. But the greatest advantage for the student in this forum is the result of heated criticism and discussions that emerge among students, most of them masters in their respective fields, regarding all types of matters, and especially about aesthetics.⁴⁰

Manrique not only described the Académie Julian as a social hub, but also as an alternative art space, filled with students who were tired of the “customary teachings, conventionalisms, and rancid traditions” of the École. This description by Manrique demonstrates how the mission of the Académie Julian had evolved from preparing students for the École examination to becoming a modern and independent entity in and of itself. According to art historian Catherine Fehrer, by 1887 “...the Académie Julian had gained the reputation of being a center for modernism and Impressionism. A little

⁴⁰ “el mas refinado...concurren los pintores y escultores de todo el mundo que desean perfeccionar sus estudios, y la juventud francesa que no quiere someterse a la enseñanza rutinaria y empapada en los convencionalismos y rancias tradiciones de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes. Ingleses, rusos, australianos, japoneses, chinos, argentinos, no hay pueblo del mundo, se puede asegurar, que no tenga algún representante en aquellos talleres, a donde van a estudiar el desnudo y la composición, guiados por eminentes maestros. Pero el provecho mayor para el estudiante en aquel cenáculo, es el resultado de las acaloradas críticas y discusiones que se libran entre los alumnos, la mayor parte de ellos maestros en sus respectivos centros, sobre toda clase de asuntos, y especialmente sobre estética.” Pedro Carlos Manrique, “El premio del salón de Paris,” *Revista Ilustrada*, no. 5 (August 22, 1899): 333-334.

later, the Nabis group formed around a group of students who had met and studied together at Julian's."⁴¹

Although the Académie Julian maintained its roster of Academic and École-trained professors and its mission to prepare students for the École entrance exam, the studio also facilitated the development of progressive artists, such as the Nabis, and allowed for Colombian artists, including Acevedo Bernal and Cano, to venture past the academicism of Bouguereau (to which Garay remained loyal) and absorb innovative styles. This was largely the result of the casual and communal nature of the studio, through which students "learnt from each other...[and discovered] the rich street life of Paris."⁴² Social networks introduced artists to a diverse community, and also led to the development of stylistic movements that extended past the walls of the studio.

The Latin American Art Community in Paris

Although the Académie Julian was the most popular destination among international students, it was not the only option, and Colombian artists chose to enroll there mainly because of a Colombian, and larger Latin American, social network. Bonded by language and culture, Colombian artists naturally gravitated toward each other in Paris; however, due to the costs and complexities of transatlantic travel, they made connections even before their arrival. Pensioned artists, and particularly those who were

⁴¹ Catherine Fehrer, "Introduction," in *Overcoming all Obstacles: The Women of the Académie Julian*, 4.

⁴² John Milner, *The Studios of Paris: The Capital of Art in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 13.

unaccustomed to international travel, like Cano, arrived in Paris with either a list of contacts and instructions, or accompanied by friends or family.⁴³ Colombian diplomats, such as Santa María's father, accounted for more than one-third of Colombian travelers to Europe between 1845 and 1900, though this higher class traveler did not interact much with pensioned travelers.⁴⁴ Since the majority of Colombian travelers and artists, including Garay, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal, were not a part of this social elite, their social networking abilities were instrumental to their survival in Paris, and ultimately to their decision about where to study.

Despite class differences, many Colombian artists arrived to the Académie Julian via contacts made either before they left or in Paris. Cano, Gaviria, and Bolivar all registered at the Académie Julian between the years 1895 and 1900. Marco Tobón Mejía, Cano's former pupil and fellow resident of Medellín, also registered at Julian's studio (ten years after Cano, in 1908). The reoccurring presence of Colombian artists at the Académie Julian throughout the early twentieth century suggests that Colombian artists were in communication with one another, and followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. Because Garay, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal were among the first Colombian artists to enroll, they not only set the precedent for this artistic pilgrimage to Paris but to study at the Académie Julian.⁴⁵

⁴³ According to Santiago Londoño Vélez, "El pintor Francisco A. Cano: nacimiento de la academia en Antioquia," *Credencial Historia*, no. 81 (September 1996): 9, Francisco A. Cano traveled in the company of Mrs. and Dr. Luis Zea Uribe, a Colombian medical doctor who practiced alternative medicine and supposedly talked to the dead.

⁴⁴ Martínez, *El nacionalismo cosmopolita*, 218.

⁴⁵ The popularity of the Académie Julian for Colombian artists continued through the 1920s, with artists such as Romulo Rozo (1899-1964) and Eladio Vélez (1897-1967) enrolling there. However this studio met competition by the rise of the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, where Colombian muralist Luis Alberto Acuña (1904-1994) studied from 1924 to 1928.

The friendships that formed at the Académie among artists of all nationalities was an important part of the experience there. Among the Latin American artists Eduardo Schiaffino befriended there was the Venezuelan painter Arturo Michelena, whom he met “... accompanied by his Venezuelan colleague Cristóbal Rojas and the Chilean sculptor [Virginio] Arias, Eduardo Sívori was his peer.”⁴⁶ Schiaffino’s description indicates a large and varied presence of Latin American painters and sculptors at the Académie Julian. According to Francisco Javier Duplá, Michelena also socialized with his compatriot Emilio Boggio (1857-1920), and with Argentine painter Eduardo Schiaffino and Spanish artist Francisco Domingo y Marqués.⁴⁷ Also at the Académie Julian, Colombian artists socialized with their French counterparts, as did Manrique, who befriended French painter Paul Émile Chabas (1869-1937).⁴⁸

Other venues that allowed South American artists, specifically, to meet were the Sociedad Española--to which Acevedo Bernal and Argentinean Eduardo Sívori belonged--and the Sociedad Politécnica de Colombia, Paris Section (where Urdaneta was a member). Although Spanish-speaking artists in Paris came from a variety of social backgrounds and cultural traditions, their shared language was a binding force. It was, for instance, that which drew together Santa María and Ignacio Zuloaga, an internationally acclaimed Spanish painter who was friendly with the French Impressionists.⁴⁹ Colombian artists did not live in an artistic colony or in close proximity to one another, as was the

⁴⁶ “en compañía de su compatriota venezolano Cristóbal Rojas y del escultor chileno Arias, Eduardo Sívori fue su compañero de estudio.” Eduardo Schiaffino, “Arturo Michelena,” *El Mercurio de America* 1, no. 4 (November, 4 1898): 255-259.

⁴⁷ Javier Francisco Duplá, *Arturo Michelena, 1863-1898* (Caracas: Editora El Nacional, 2007), 23.

⁴⁸ Manrique, 333-334.

⁴⁹ Mayi Milhou, in *Ignacio Zuloaga (1870-1945) et la France* (Le Bouscat: M. Milhou, 1981), discusses in greater detail Zuloaga’s friendship with the French avant-garde.

case with North American artists, but this did not deter them from building casual relationships with each other.⁵⁰

Galleries and museums, particularly the Louvre, were also sites of regular interaction between international artists. Manrique, for instance, first met Garay at the Louvre, in 1882,⁵¹ and later recalled: “A common affinity and the distance of our country brought our friendship closer together.”⁵² This passage establishes their strong companionship in Paris, and suggests that Manrique may have influenced Garay’s enrollment at the Académie Julian, since his registration at the Académie postdates his encounter with Manrique. The communal spirit of the Académie Julian, combined with the camaraderie felt among Colombian and other Latin American artists throughout different sites in Paris, demonstrates how these social networks, in which language served as a binding force, were important to the experience and perhaps even survival of these artists overseas.

French Traditions:

The Nude

Those who attended the Académie Julian tended to be artists who liked the studio’s focus on life drawing. The Colombian artists of this study, and, no doubt others,

⁵⁰ See Table 1 for a list of the name and addresses of Colombian artists in Paris.

⁵¹ Pedro Carlos Manrique, “En la flaca historia del arte colombiano corresponde a Epifanio Garay puesto distinguido,” *Revista Ilustrada*, no. 2 (July 9, 1898): 24.

⁵² “Una común afición y la distancia de la patria estrecho nuestra amistad.” *Ibid.*

were particularly drawn to this aspect of the Académie Julian, since at home they had no access to live models and only limited access to prints, photographs, and casts. It was not until the early twentieth century that live models were officially incorporated into the curriculum of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, thanks to the efforts of Garay and Santa María. The nude, and primarily the female nude, became a topic of both great interest and controversy for Colombian artists who traveled to Europe. It is remarkable that the Director of the Academia Española de Bellas Artes in Rome felt compelled to write a letter to the Colombian Ambassador in Italy requesting permission for Colombian artists to be able to join “...the nude class that in the early hours of the night takes place in this Academy.”⁵³

It was in Paris that Santiago Gutiérrez, who exhibited the earliest nude painting in Colombia in 1874,⁵⁴ first became interested in the subject.⁵⁵ While Garay utilized biblical subjects as pretexts for creating “acceptable” nudes, Gutiérrez represented his female nude as a mythological subject. Although the woman in Gutiérrez’s *Huntress of the Andes* is shown in full frontal nudity, her bow and arrow, as well as the fur allude to her symbolic role as Diana, the Goddess of the Hunt (Fig. 13). The rugged mountainous setting behind her represents the Andes, the mountain range that traverses Colombia and runs along the Pacific coast of South America. Although some scholars—citing the similarities between *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* (Fig. 14) and *Huntress of the Andes*—have suggested that Garay’s use of nudity was directly influenced

⁵³ “...la clase del desnudo que en las primeras horas de la noche tiene lugar en esta Academia.” President of the Real Accademia di Belle Arte, Rome, to the Legación de Colombia en Italia, 1928-1932, transcript in printed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

⁵⁴ González, 107.

⁵⁵ In Paris, Gutiérrez furthered his studies of the female nude, which he had originally initiated in Rome. *Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez: pasión y destino* (Toluca: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1993), 40.

by his teacher, Gutiérrez,⁵⁶ it was actually in Paris as a student of the Académie Julian where Garay first attempted a nude, though somewhat unsuccessfully.

As Cano later recalled, Garay was a “profound connoisseur of the human body.”⁵⁷ Although *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* is Garay’s only surviving nude, Cano also mentioned an earlier one (location unknown) that was entered in a Parisian competition, but did not win a prize.⁵⁸ Cano’s testimony not only demonstrates Garay’s admiration for the nude and documents his attempts to paint it, but also suggests that Garay, like Gutiérrez, became interested in this subject while in France.

As a pensioned artist, Garay often was obliged to paint what his Colombian patrons wanted, namely portraits and religious scenes. His strong interest in the nude was not something his Colombian sponsors (particularly the members of the Regeneración) would have encouraged; yet while in France, where the female nude was a common subject among Salon exhibitors, Garay’s representation of the subject was instead a sign of conformity and assimilation.⁵⁹ In *Woman from the Levite of the Ephraim Mountains*, Garay takes up a biblical narrative, albeit an obscure story from the Old Testament’s Book of Judges, that tells how a wife of a Levite, who was unfaithful to her husband, met

⁵⁶ *Historia del arte colombiano* (Bogotá: Salvat Editores Colombiana, 1977), 1292.

⁵⁷ “conocedor profundo del cuerpo humano.” Francisco A. Cano, “Epifanio Garay,” *Lectura y Arte*, no. 4/5 (December 1903): 65.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵⁹ For an extended discussion on the presence of the female nude in painting and on the role of women as models, see Heather Dawkins, *The Nude in French Art and Culture, 1870-1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Susan Waller, *The Invention of the Model: Artists and Models in Paris, 1830-1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006).

her punishment when she was raped and abused by thieves.⁶⁰ Garay has depicted her husband's discovery of his wife's body, which lies stripped naked on their doorstep.

Like Garay, Cano also painted nudes in Paris. His *Model of the Académie Julian* (1898) is one of his earliest nude studies, as well as one of his more subdued and dignified representations of the subject (Fig. 15). In choosing to represent a male rather than a female model, and in restricting his nudity to the upper body, Cano reveals his apprehensiveness with the genre. The model's strictly frontal pose and large scale suggest forthrightness. The figurative sketches that Cano made during his travels from 1897 to 1899, further demonstrate the artist's focus on the live model, a common practice at the Académie Julian (Fig. 16).⁶¹ Although Cano's studies are fairly straightforward, later works, made after his return from Paris, treat the female nude in erotic and dramatic ways.

Acevedo Bernal also worked with nudes in Paris. Although his *Model in Paris* represents a clothed figure, perhaps in her undergarments, the title and its inscription on the reverse, "1889 Paris," indicate that he did life drawing there (Fig. 17). Acevedo Bernal is not known to have been in Paris until 1903, but the date suggests either that he was in Paris prior to his 1903 trip—which is unlikely—or that either he or somebody else misdated the work.⁶² Due to its sketchy brushwork and unconventional vantage

⁶⁰ Inspired by this same biblical narrative, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote a prose poem titled *The Levite of Ephraim*, which was published posthumously in 1781. Rousseau's poem has been interpreted from a feminist perspective by Tanya Horeck, who has discussed the relation between rape and war, in "Body Politics: Rousseau's Le Lévitte d'Ephraïm," in *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* (London: Routledge, 2004), and Judith Still in "Rousseau's Lévitte D'Ephraïm: The Imposition of Meaning (on Women)," *French Studies* 43 (1989): 12-30.

⁶¹ Francisco A. Cano, *Apuntes de Viaje: Medellín, Paris 1897-1899*, ed. Dario Jaramillo Agudelo (Bogotá: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2004): np

⁶² Beatriz González, in an email sent to me on February 23, 2009, wrote that she suspects that the inscription on the reverse is false.

point, it seems to have been painted around 1905, when Acevedo Bernal was registered at the Académie Julian, and when his canvases were Impressionist in style.

Colombian artist Salvador Moreno, who attended the Académie Julian in the mid-1890s depicted a live model in *Back* (Fig. 18), which is signed “Paris 1897” and dedicated to Rafael Pombo. In this canvas, Moreno represents the back muscles of a male model, and utilizes strong *chiaroscuro* effects to accentuate the model’s musculature. These various interpretations by Cano, Acevedo Bernal, and Moreno of the live model show how the culture of drawing from the nude was something unique to their Parisian experience. That they did not produce these canvases in Colombia further demonstrates the strong impression that this practice had on Colombian artists.

After Paris, Cano’s nude paintings changed from academic-looking studies to erotic treatments, through which the female body arouses sexual feeling by means of allusion. *The Last Drop* (1908, Fig. 19), which represents a reclining woman with bright red cheeks holding an empty wine glass, clearly suggests alcohol consumption, while her casual pose and unabashed nudity perhaps allude to sexual availability.⁶³ Further contributing to this erotic interpretation is the suggestion, made by Santiago Londoño Vélez, that *The Last Drop* was based on the amorous poem “Air,” written by Rafael Pombo.⁶⁴ *Female Nude* (1910, Fig. 20) also depicts a reclining and red-cheeked woman; however in this case, the mood is more mysterious since there is no defined setting or narrative. Set against a shadowy black backdrop, the woman is represented in a relaxed

⁶³ In an interview held in 1916, Cano singled out this canvas, *The Last Drop*, as one of his favorites. “Jack” [Luis Eduardo Nieto Caballero], “Con el pintor F.A. Cano,” *El Gráfico* (August 12, 1916): 12.

⁶⁴ Santiago Londoño Vélez, “Imágenes de la mujer en el arte colombiano,” in *Las mujeres en la historia de Colombia*, ed. Magdala Velásquez Toro (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 1995), 291.

pose with her eyes closed as if consumed in sexual pleasure. Based on the distinctly erotic nature of these nudes one wonders for whom these canvases were produced.

Cano's nudes seem to have been made for private patrons since they were rarely exhibited, whereas Garay publicly exhibited *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* in 1899.⁶⁵ That these canvases remained buried in private collections demonstrates the extent to which erotic subjects had to be safely guarded, as well as how patronage impacted a considerable part of Cano's production. The creation of erotica for private delectation was not novel in a city like Paris, however in Medellín these canvases were some of the earliest nudes painted in Colombia.⁶⁶ Because these paintings, as described by Londoño Vélez, "encapsulate a moral parable that alludes to blame, regret, and the ephemeral human pleasures," they were particularly influential on later artists such as Débora Arango (1907-2005), who took this idea further with her representation of prostitutes.⁶⁷

Cano's *Voluptuousness of the Ocean* (1924, Fig. 21), of which he painted two versions, one for himself and the other for the painter and poet José Restrepo Rivera (1886-1958), probably was inspired by Bouguereau's *The Wave* (1896, Fig. 22). Although Cano studied under Jean-Paul Laurens and Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant (1845-1902) at the Académie Julian, he would have been familiar with Bouguereau, who was a prominent professor at this same studio, and whose work was widely exhibited at

⁶⁵ See Miguel Escobar Calle and Catalina Pérez Builes, "Cronología," in *Francisco Antonio Cano 1865-1935*, 211-221, for the names of the collectors who owned these nude canvases, including *The Last Drop* and *Voluptuousness of the Ocean*.

⁶⁶ Londoño Vélez, "Imágenes de la mujer en el arte colombiano," 291.

⁶⁷ "encierra una parábola moral que alude a la culpa, al arrepentimiento y a lo efímero de los placeres humano." Santiago Londoño Vélez, *Débora Arango: vida de pintora* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, República de Colombia, 1997), 91.

the Salons. In Bouguereau's painting the figure is seated upright, the execution is smooth, and the colors muted (mainly shades of grey). In Cano's, however, the woman's body is stretched across the water and her head turned away from the viewer, as if in a state of ecstasy. Cano's palette is bright, as evidenced by the pink sunset and green reflections on the water, and his brushwork freer than Bouguereau's, something that is best appreciated in the foam created by the waves. *Voluptuousness of the Ocean*, executed more than 20 years after Cano's return from Paris, demonstrates the visual integration of three French traditions: the female nude, the painting of Bouguereau, and the brushwork of Impressionism.

Since Cano was a government-sponsored artist he had to be careful in his choices of what to represent and display. Painted for a colleague who shared his interests, as well as for himself, *Voluptuousness of the Ocean* reflects the type of risqué canvases that Colombian artists might have chosen to exhibit in Colombia, had they been given the opportunity. This painting also reveals the compromises made by the majority of Colombian travelers, who upheld their traditionalism by studying under Academic masters. At the same time that they upheld convention, they countered it with broken brushstrokes and unblended colors, characteristics of Impressionism, as well as with their treatment of a female nude. This type of contradiction was common among Colombian artists in Paris, and alluded to the larger problem of how they worked through complex cultural and artistic differences.

The works of Cano, Garay, and Moreno were extremely influential in Colombia. This influence included their use of nudity, as their works represent the earliest examples

of nude paintings in Colombian art.⁶⁸ In fact, Garay's *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* and Moreno's *Back*, both currently on display at the Museo Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá, are the only nude paintings in the nineteenth-century galleries. As a result, these artists' works continue to stand out in comparison to those of their contemporaries. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, which explores the legacy of Paris on the lives of the later generation of artists and on the curriculum of the Academy, these early nudes encouraged the practice of live modeling at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, and influenced the arts production of future painters and sculptors, such as Marco Tobón Mejía.

Tobón Mejía was a pupil of Cano, and like his mentor, he also was deeply interested in the female nude. Under Cano, Tobón Mejía learned techniques of painting and graphic illustration. When Tobón Mejía was diagnosed with myopia and color blindness, however, Cano recommended he pursue a career in sculpture instead. Determined to pursue a profession in illustration, Tobón Mejía traveled to New York and Cuba, working for various newspapers, like *Le Figaro*, before settling in Paris in 1908.⁶⁹ Following in the footsteps of his mentor, who had previously enrolled at the Académie Julian, Tobón Mejía also enrolled there. He did not at first study sculpture, as Cano had suggested, but instead continued his training in painting, spending four months at Julian's studio, from November 1908 to February 1909. Two years later, in 1911, he finally turned to sculpture, after receiving an invitation to visit the studio of Auguste Rodin (1840-

⁶⁸ In the following chapter, I discuss the shock produced by Garay's *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountain*, considered the first nude canvas in Colombia to have been exhibited by a Colombian artist.

⁶⁹ Jorge Cárdenas, *Vida y obra de Marco Tobón Mejía* (Medellín: Museo de Antioquia, 1987), 166.

1917). This experience, as he described in a letter dated February 11, 1911, was one of the greatest honors and fondest memories of his life.⁷⁰

Arriving in Paris later than Cano and possessing a different artistic temperament, Tobón Mejía came in contact with different stylistic trends and artists. Influenced by the themes of Symbolism and the typography of Art Nouveau, Tobón Mejía blended all of these influences into his sculpture and graphic illustrations. He was particularly drawn to “the language of symbolism: the fantasy, idealism, myth and joy,” which art historian Catalina Pérez Builes has identified as the most important “aspects that this movement promoted and which were perfect so that Tobón could create romantic images, concepts, and intangible sensations.”⁷¹ His relief sculpture of *Salome* (1910) depicts the biblical scene of Salome performing the Dance of the Seven Veils for her stepfather Herod Antipas (Fig. 23). This leads to the death of John the Baptist, and consequently, to the delight of her mother, Herodias. In portraying Salome as a person sexually attracted to corpses—a necrophiliac shown embracing the severed head of the man she was responsible for having killed, Tobón Mejía’s representation parallels the theatrical interpretation by playwright Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) in 1891, and the opera revival by composer Richard Strauss (1864-1949) in 1905.

Tobón Mejía also was influenced by Symbolist painters, such as Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921), and by Symbolist precursors like Gustave Moreau (1826-1898), who drew

⁷⁰ Marco Tobón Mejía, Paris, to Carlos E. Restrepo, Bogotá, February 11, 1911, transcript in the hand of Marco Tobón Mejía, Archives of Carlos E. Restrepo, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín.

⁷¹ “el lenguaje del simbolismo: la fantasía, el idealismo, el mito y la alegría... aspectos que este movimiento promovía y eran perfectos para que Tobón pudiera crear imágenes románticas, conceptos y sensaciones intangibles.” Catalina Pérez Builes, *Francisco Antonio Cano y sus discípulos* (Medellín: La Carreta, 2004), 72.

inspiration from occult myths and dramatic biblical subjects.⁷² Tobón Mejía reveals this influence through his rendering of Salome as a *femme fatale*. The eroticism of the woman's body, as reflected in her nudity and pose, speak to the dangers of seductive beauty. Jacqueline Barnitz, in her discussion of Symbolism in Latin America, discusses Tobón Mejía's *Salome* as the combination of two European influences: Symbolist art and the work of Rodin, which "includes female nudes in seductive poses, sometimes with their genitals in full view."⁷³

Thais (1910), named after the 1894 Jules Massenet opera about an Egyptian courtesan, and *Salome* (1910, Fig. 24) are examples of Tobón Mejía's Symbolist representations of women. The silhouettes of these women, often shown behind diaphanous draperies, and their idealized bodies, portrayed in low relief, recall the work of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), who represented simplified figures against a flat picture surface. Nevertheless, Tobón Mejía's work diverges significantly from that of Puvis de Chavannes in their more erotic and dramatic nature which is more in keeping with Symbolist painting. While the women typically represent controlled poses, standing or kneeling with their legs tightly joined together, the movement of their limbs and hair endow them with a sense of liberation that counterbalances the tension of their poses. These works, which were completed in Paris, demonstrate how a sense of liberation, in either a stylistic or thematic manner, was characteristic of the experience of these Colombian travelers abroad.

⁷² For more information on Symbolism, see Robert Goldwater, *Symbolism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).

⁷³ Jacqueline Barnitz, *Twentieth-century Art of Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 16.

Together with Garay and Cano, Tobón Mejía introduced nudity and eroticism to Colombian painting, creating what Londoño Vélez has identified “the paradigm of the feminine image for modernism.”⁷⁴ In addition, Tobón Mejía championed the Symbolist idea of the *femme fatale* in works including *Salome*, *Thais*, *Female Vampire* (1910), and others. His Symbolist iconography, informed by obscure mythology but figuratively rooted in classicism, also allowed him to introduce a new genre to Colombian art, and one to which Garay alluded in *Woman of the Levite of the Ephraim Mountains*,⁷⁵ but which achieves full fruition in the work of Tobón Mejía: the creation of the pagan female nude. As María Margarita Malagón argues:

Without pretending to deny the academic and neoclassical elements... the work of the female nude, as proposed by Tobón, distant from the traditional religious thematic, and nearing the fulfillment of the ‘pagan’ type in the expression of sentiment through the body, or in the expression of the body in and of itself in its form and texture, resulted ‘eccentric’ and in fact it would have been questioned within the context of the period.⁷⁶

The introduction of the female nude as a secular subject continued in the work of twentieth-century figurative painters, like Débora Arango, and, to a lesser extent, in the work of Santa María.

⁷⁴ “el paradigma de la imagen femenina para el modernismo.” Londoño Vélez, “Imágenes de la mujer en el arte colombiano,” 292.

⁷⁵ In *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains*, the biblical storyline is called into question by the physical presence and seductive power of the woman’s nudity, perhaps suggesting that Garay’s canvas could also be interpreted as a Symbolist painting—especially considering the obscure narrative. In fact, this might offer another explanation of why the canvas, as discussed in the following chapter, was received with such contempt in Colombia.

⁷⁶ “Sin pretender negar los elementos académicos y neoclásicos... el trabajo del desnudo femenino, tal y como lo propone Tobón, alejado de la temática religiosa tradicional, y realizando un acercamiento de tipo ‘pagano’ a la expresión del sentimiento a través del cuerpo, o a la expresión del cuerpo por sí mismo en su forma y textura, resultaba ‘excéntrico’ e incluso podía llegar a ser cuestionado dentro del contexto de la época.” María Margarita Malagón, “El desnudo femenino en la obra de Marco Tobón Mejía: La recepción y su contexto colombiano,” in *Artistas colombianos* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1999), 42.

For Santa María, the female nude was not a distinct passion or particular interest as it was for Garay, Cano, or Tobón Mejía; rather, it was a small part of his art production with less than ten surviving. Two in the Museo Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá--*Women of the Spring* (1906, Fig. 25) and *Woman with a Basket* (1905, Fig. 26)--were painted in Colombia after the artist had returned from London and Paris. *Women of the Spring* reveals the influence of French bather scenes, such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir's (1841-1919) *The Large Bathers* (1884-1887, Fig. 27), which were common during the 1880s,⁷⁷ when Santa María was at the École. Santa María surely would have seen such paintings at the art exhibitions he frequented.⁷⁸ Renoir's *The Large Bathers* was exhibited, for example, at the 1887 Exposition Internationale de Peinture et de Sculpture at Galerie Georges Petit, a popular show that he likely visited.⁷⁹ Even if he did not attend this particular exhibition, Santa María, whose own work was included in the Salon des Artistes Français of 1887,⁸⁰ would have seen there "at least twenty-five representations of female bathers, all indistinguishable in theme from Renoir's painting."⁸¹

In *Women of the Spring*, Santa María represents the traditional subject of women gathered communally near a water source and in the process of bathing. While Santa María does not utilize the rounded figures or controlled brushwork of Renoir's *The Large*

⁷⁷ Linda Nochlin, in *Bathers, Bodies, Beauty: The Visceral Eye* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 17, argues that the prevalence of bather scenes coincided with "the artistic *rappel à l'ordre* of the 1880s," when French artists "attempted to restore a sense of permanence, timelessness, and harmony to the openness, instability, and vivid contemporaneity characteristic of High Impressionism."

⁷⁸ Eduardo Serrano, *Andrés de Santa María: pintor colombiano de resonancia universal* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1988), 19.

⁷⁹ For an extended discussion on Renoir's *The Large Bathers*, and on how Renoir utilized the theme of bathers as a response to his growing disillusionment with Impressionism, see Christopher Riopelle, "Renoir: The Great Bathers," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin* 86, no. 367/368 (Autumn, 1990): 3-40.

⁸⁰ Santa María's exhibition debut, as discussed in Chapter 3, was at the Salon des Artistes Français of 1887, where he exhibited *Seine Laundresses*.

⁸¹ Nochlin, 16.

Bathers, he did construct a similar composition, as seen in the placement of three women in the foreground. Both Santa María's work and the Renoir were rendered in a comparable palette of pastels but the brushstrokes from one to the other are completely different. Santa María's *Women of the Spring* (as well as his *Woman with a Basket*) was painted in an expressive, uncontrolled, and even chaotic manner whereas Renoir's is much more tame and refined.

As demonstrated in the work of Garay, Cano, and Santa María, the ability to reinterpret a subject like the female nude according to different narratives and stylistic preferences allows us to assess the artistic preferences of each artist as well as to see to what extent these artists were willing to push the limits of figurative representation in Colombia. The nude, which had no precedent in Colombian painting, except for Santiago Gutiérrez's showing of the *Huntress of the Andes*, was first championed by Garay, Cano, Tobón Mejía, and Santa María, in ways that extended past the mere representation of the subject. These artists paved the way for the incorporation of live models into the curriculum of the Escuela de Bellas Artes and, consequently, to the more radical transformation of this subject in a modernist idiom.

French Traditions:

The Development of Caricature, and the Illustrated Press

Although caricature existed in Colombia before the artists of this study traveled abroad, Urdaneta and Garay gained a new appreciation of it while in Paris. For Urdaneta, who turned especially to the work of French caricaturist Charles Philippon (1800-1861)

for inspiration, caricature was a political tool. For others, like Garay, it was a means through which humor and wit could be explored.

While the tradition of caricature is universal and has existed since the sixteenth century, it flourished in Europe beginning in the eighteenth century due to technological advances in printing. British illustrators Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827) and James Gillray (1757–1815) were particularly influential in popularizing the art form, transforming caricature into a serious art form.⁸² In France, caricature flourished during the reign of Louis-Philippe (1773-1850), when Charles Philippon founded the satirical magazine, *La Caricature* (1830-1835), which established the reputation of major French caricaturists, such as Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) and J.J. Grandville (1803-1847).⁸³

Urdaneta, one of the strongest advocates of the printed press, attempted numerous times both within Colombia and abroad, to establish a serial, illustrated publication. His first attempt in this endeavor was just after his first trip to Paris in 1865 when he founded *El Mochuelo* (“The Owl”), in which he caricatured his political enemies. Threatened by the rise of liberalism, the publication, like the conservative army of “El Mochuelo,” fought against President Aquileo Parra and his followers of the radical left. The cover of *El Mochuelo*’s first issue (Fig. 6), dated September 27, 1887, depicts an owl next to Sergio Camargo, as “the president of peace” taking over Aquileo Parra’s presidency. While Camargo rides on his sword, it is with his baton (inscribed with the decree number and date), rather than force, that he removes Parra, who rides a train from which the trailing smoke spells “guerra” (“war”). These threatening allusions to war were further

⁸² For more information on James Gillray, see Richard Godfrey and Mark Hallett, *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001).

⁸³ For an extended discussion on French caricature, see Beatrice Farwell’s *The Charged Image: French Lithographic Caricature, 1816-1848* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1989).

reinforced by the text at the bottom that reads: “Colombia is the land of singular things. The military gives peace and the civilians give war.”⁸⁴ Urdaneta depicts the decree with which Camargo attempted to make peace with the conservatives while demonstrating his irreverence towards Camargo’s gesture through his overt allusions to war. By enlarging the heads of these politicians and shrinking their limbs, Urdaneta injects humor into the narrative. He also illustrates the irony he found in Camargo’s attempt at making peace which he really believes will lead to war.

As a result of his conservative affiliations and before the release of *El Mochuelo*’s third issue, Urdaneta was imprisoned on October 14, 1877, joining other political prisoners and prisoners of war.⁸⁵ Six months later, Urdaneta’s father negotiated with President Parra for his son’s political exile to France. During Urdaneta’s second trip to Paris he studied under Ernest Meissonier, a celebrated painter of miniature and highly detailed oil paintings.⁸⁶ According to Pilar Moreno de Angel, Urdaneta was particularly drawn to Meissonier’s miniature paintings because this type of detail-oriented work paralleled his own efforts in the illustrated press.⁸⁷

While in Paris, Urdaneta introduced his third publication, *Los Andes*, on June 23, 1878 (Fig. 7). The initial cover of this publication features children as personifications of painting, writing, and printing, all riding skyward on a pen. Distinct from his earlier

⁸⁴ “En Colombia que es la tierra de las cosas singulares. Dan la paz los militares, y los civiles dan la guerra.” Alberto Urdaneta, Cover of *El Mochuelo* (September 27, 1877).

⁸⁵ Alberto Urdaneta, *Ecoss de mi segunda prisión*, ed. Pilar Moreno de Angel (Bogotá: Banco de América Latina, 1975), 25. This book also features a compilation of the drawings Urdaneta made during his time in jail.

⁸⁶ *Alberto Urdaneta: vida y obra* (Bogotá: Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, 1992), 14; Pilar Moreno de Angel, *Alberto Urdaneta* (Bogotá: Bogotá Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1972), 61; and Carmen Ortega Ricaurte, *Diccionario de Artistas en Colombia* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janes, 1979), 489.

⁸⁷ Moreno de Angel, 61.

publications, *El Agricultor*, which focused on agricultural techniques and cattle breeding, and *El Mochuelo*, which was entirely political, *Los Andes* was the first serial publication targeted to a wider and more cosmopolitan audience. The ambitious nature of *Los Andes*, which was meant to reach both a European and Latin American audience, in my view demonstrates the extent to which Urdaneta understood the potential of the printed press to reach a broad audience, as well as its capacity to serve as an educational tool. Urdaneta surely cultivated this sophisticated knowledge of the social potential of print in Paris, where the accessibility and readership of the printed press was higher than in Latin America.⁸⁸

In addition to setting up his new publication, Urdaneta also befriended Antonio Rodríguez, illustrator and collaborator of *Le Monde Illustré* while in Paris this time. Three years later, in 1881, the two of them traveled together to Colombia where they embarked on numerous projects including a new publication, *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*. They also established the Escuela del Grabado and introduced wood engravings, a technique Urdaneta had learned in France, into the printmaking curriculum of the Colegio de San Bartolomé in Bogotá. In France, Urdaneta had not only learned of this type of printing, but he had also returned to his interest in political caricature. While Urdaneta promoted the growth of the illustrated press in Colombia, he also produced biting political caricature, something that he did not feature in his illustrations for *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*, but rather in drawings that have survived in many albums.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Martínez, *El nacionalismo cosmopolita*, 120-121, states that since French, English, and Spanish newspapers that arrived in Colombia were destined towards political illustrators and publicists, Colombian publishing houses in Paris were extremely influential in the dissemination of information both abroad in Paris, and at home in Colombia.

⁸⁹ The surviving albums, published as facsimiles, include *Album de dibujos de Alberto Urdaneta: personajes nacionales* (1975); *Ecos de mi segunda prisión*; and *Dibujos y caricaturas* (Bogotá: Ediciones Sol y Luna, 1976).

In Urdaneta's *Dibujos & Caricaturas* album, the representation of Ramón Gómez (1874-1948) as a frog becomes a reoccurring theme (Figs. 28 and 29).⁹⁰ In the first caricature, the Republic of Colombia is represented on a balance; however, it is outweighed by the physical weight and prominence of the frog. In fact, the presence of the frog is so prominent that it occupies most of the drawing, while the faint and almost unrecognizable statue of the Republic of Colombia remains marginalized in the background. In the second caricature, the frog envelops four radical politicians, Manuel Murillo Toro (1816-1880), Jacobo Sánchez (1824-1898), Nicolas Esguerra (1838-1923), and Ramón Gómez himself in a Phrygian cap, under the heading "Liberty and Equality." ("Libertad y Igualdad") In satirical text exemplified by the presence of the frog, Urdaneta suggests that these four men are neither free nor equal, but followers in their own right, and therefore prisoners in a sense, of these radical philosophies.

Like Philippon, who continuously caricatured Louis-Philippe as a pear, Urdaneta also represented radical politician Ramón Gómez and his followers as frogs. Although there is no indication that Urdaneta created the frog symbol as a way of dodging censorship as Philippon did with his pears that represented "a form of guerrilla warfare against Louis-Philippe" the idea remained the same, that physical appearance reflected moral character.⁹¹ The frog, seen as a laughable and clumsy creature due to its disproportionate body with large upper body and twig-like limbs seems to have represented ugliness and awkwardness rather than the power and authority one might expect of successful politicians.

⁹⁰ This emphasis on Alberto Urdaneta as the strongest progenitor of political caricature and anti-radical sentiment in Colombia, has also been explored by Beatriz González in "La historia de caricatura," *Revista Credencial Historia* 10 (October 1990) [journal online]; available from <http://www.lablao.org/blaavirtual/revistas/credencial/octubre1990/octubre1.htm>

⁹¹ Judith Wechsler, "Caricature: Newspapers and Politics," in *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 71.

Not all of Urdaneta's work was politically charged, however, since his most ambitious publication, *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* (1881-1888), avoided explicit political statements in the form of political caricature or otherwise. Although the publication discussed current events and featured biographies of high profile political figures, such as Colombian President Rafael Nuñez and Mexican liberator Miguel Hidalgo (1753-1811), it also featured a literary section with excerpts from poems and books, as well sections devoted to the arts, music, painting, and archaeology. Different from *El Mochuelo*, the focus of *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* was on cultivating taste and advancing the arts, as matched in the graphic quality of the publication and in the wider context of the establishment of the Escuela del Grabado in 1881 and the founding of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1886.

The wealth of illustrations in *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* is clearly influenced by those of Rodríguez and are reminiscent of those in *Le Monde Illustré* insofar as they highlighted celebrated French paintings and travel imagery of foreign people and places, based on either *costumbrista*-type paintings or documentary photography. French paintings like Bouguereau's *The Virgin, Jesus & Saint John Baptist* (1875), famous portraits, like those of Simón Bolívar and Alexander von Humboldt, and picturesque representations of Colombian folk types also appeared in this publication (Figs. 30, 31, and 32). Many of these illustrations, which replicated the content of the French press, also introduced to Colombia a new printing technology--wood engravings--the preferred method of printing in Paris for illustrated journals such as Daumier's *Le Charivari*, since both text and image could be combined on the same page.

Urdaneta also created caricature for his own personal amusement, as seen in an 1886 watercolor that features a man, Urdaneta himself, with odd anatomical proportions

including skinny legs and a balloon-like upper body, that cause the man to appear to be about to lose his balance as he walks down the street (Fig. 33). The inscription inside the drawing can be translated as: “Again this damned drop which weakens my legs.”⁹² The underlying meaning of this watercolor is whimsical rather than political. It most likely refers to the clinical condition in which an increase in uric acid in the blood stream produces a distinct pain in the feet and legs.⁹³ Urdaneta’s ability to write comically in French also demonstrates his mastery of the French language, which is reflective of the “ ‘syndrome of the ‘French Europe’ ” that existed among the aristocracy, and of the limited and exclusive audience that his works attracted.

Urdaneta was not the only artist of this study who created non-politicized caricature, as Garay was also drawn to this genre. While in Paris, Garay sketched caricatured portraits of his friends, many of them fellow students of the Académie Julian. In a work he titled “Caricature of Garay” (“Caricatura de Garay) of 1884 (Fig. 34), for example, he represented himself as older than his colleagues and towering above them at far right, Manrique, at far left is shown wearing a hat and holding an umbrella, Aya with bulging eyes is positioned in the center, and to his right stands another man. The men are engaged in humorous play, the spirit of fun and familiar camaraderie suggesting the liberating effect Paris had on them. Garay was 35 years old when he drew this, exactly 10 years older than Manrique, perhaps explaining why he looks distinctly older and taller than the others.

⁹² “Encore cette maudite goutte qui amollit mes jambes.”

⁹³ In Spanish, this condition is known as “La Gota” (“The Drop”) and it is caused by metabolic deficiencies.

Another caricature by Garay of Manrique represents him with a small body, big head, and his distinctive, exaggerated mustache (Fig. 35). The playful mood of these drawings counter the typically sober and Academic style of Garay's exhibited work, and illustrate quite literally the loose and bohemian spirit characteristic of Paris at the time, which allowed Garay and others to free themselves from the restriction of personal freedoms imposed by their countries. This caricature is in keeping with an Académie Julian tradition described in 1890 by M. Riccardo Nobili, who wrote that, "...comical portraits and caricatures of the students...adorn its walls."⁹⁴ Whether or not Garay's caricatures adorned the walls there, they are a testament to the casual and communal spirit of the Académie Julian.

French Traditions:

The Representations of Labor and Vagabonds

In *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*, Urdaneta represented the Colombian rural working class in a picturesque manner that took on the viewpoint of an outsider looking in, rather than that of the native he was. Even in cases when the illustrations were based on either photographs or drawings, as in *The Shoe Shiner*, his image is more like a picturesque souvenir than an illustration documenting reality (Fig. 32). The contrived pose and humble dress of the shoe shiner, and lack of any geographically specificity resemble the

⁹⁴ M. Riccardo Nobili, "The Académie Julian," *The Cosmopolitan* 8 (April 1890): 750.

types of art that European travelers brought back as mementos from Latin America.⁹⁵

Although this type of image, which was prevalent and easily accessible in Europe via *cartes-de-visites* –relates to the European interest in “primitive” cultures, mentioned earlier, it also reflects Urdaneta’s stylistic choices.

In France, portrayals of the rural and urban working class were a trademark of Realist and Impressionist painters. Realists, inspired by the revolutions of 1848, elevated the subject of rural laborers and peasants to the realm of high art, and in so doing, they democratized art.⁹⁶ In a less polemical manner and later in the century, Impressionists focused on urban labor, and with greater frequency on representations of modern life and bourgeois leisure.⁹⁷ Scholars such as Norma Broude, Linda Nochlin, and Beatrice Farwell have discussed the theme of labor with relation to the Impressionists,⁹⁸ and Broude in particular has argued for:

...the very important role that the theme of work plays in Impressionist art—not only in the paintings of Camille Pissarro, who, among these artists, most conspicuously continued the Barbizon school tradition of painting rural peasants and laborers... but also in the work of Degas and Caillebotte, whose paintings of

⁹⁵ For an extended discussion on the topic, see Robert M. Levine, *Images of History: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Latin American Photographs as Document* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989); and John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1988).

⁹⁶ For an extended discussion on Realism, see Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (London: Penguin, 1971).

⁹⁷ For more information on the subject, see Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); and T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁹⁸ Linda Nochlin, in “Morisot’s *Wet Nurse*: The Construction of Work and Leisure in Impressionist Painting,” in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 37-56, discusses the theme of work from a feminist perspective and with relation to representations of women and the role of women artists. Norma Broude has also explored the relation between feminism and Impressionism, in *Impressionism, A Feminist Reading: The Gendering of Art, Science, and Nature in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1991). Griselda Pollock engages in a more theoretical discussion on the subject in her anthology, *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1987). Beatrice Farwell has also discussed this issue, in *French Popular Lithographic Imagery, 1815-1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981-1997), although she attributes the representation of urban labor to popular media and particularly to prints.

laundresses and milliners, floor scrapers and house painters at work extended and developed the Naturalist theme of urban labor as a subject for contemporary art.⁹⁹

Just as Europeans were slow to accept the radical change of mundane subject matter in both Realism and Impressionism, Latin Americans were as well. While scenes of labor were becoming more and more commonplace in Europe with these movements, they were still uncommon in Latin America and considered tasteless, especially in a finished painting.¹⁰⁰ This began to change, however, when Latin American artists began bringing their European experiences home.¹⁰¹

The representation of female labor especially captivated the attention of a number of Colombian artists. Santa María and Cano, for example, both represented women engaged in demanding physical activity such as washing, drying, and ironing clothes, such as in *Seine Laundresses* (1887, Fig. 36) by Santa María and *The Seamstress* (1924, Fig. 37) by Cano. In contrast to *Women Ironing* (c. 1884-1886) by Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Santa María's and Cano's paintings present a tamer, more subdued, representation of the subject, devoid of the backbreaking and arduous labor that characterizes Degas' painting (Fig. 38).¹⁰² *The Seamstress*, in particular, reveals the culmination of both European thematic and stylistic traditions, as seen in Cano's representation of labor, and

⁹⁹ Norma Broude, ed., *World Impressionism: The International Movement, 1860-1920* (New York: Abrams, 1994), 20.

¹⁰⁰ Loomis Catlin, 68.

¹⁰¹ Although representations of labor existed within the tradition of *costumbrista* painting, these scenes of labor by Cano and Santa María are mainly of indoor activities, such as ironing and sewing, and of distinctly Parisian landmarks, as in *Seine Laundresses*. As a result of their domesticity and foreignness, these canvases reflect a European influence, and in so doing, reject any reference to *costumbrismo*, nationalism, or geographical specificity.

¹⁰² Degas represented urban workers such as laundresses, milliners, and dancers. According to Theodore Reff, in *Degas: The Artist's Mind* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), Degas was influenced by the writings of Émile Zola (1840-1902), who wrote about these modern subjects, including laundresses ironing.

in such technical details as the thick application of white paint on the figure's face and clothes as well as the sketchy brushwork.

Seine Laundresses is characteristic of Santa María's early works, before he began experimenting with color in a more abstract and expressionist manner. Revealing the thematic influence of both French Realism and Impressionism, *Seine Laundresses* stylistically pays homage to the work of Henri Gervex, Santa María's earliest mentor and instructor at the École. Although Gervex was friendly with the Impressionists, particularly Renoir and Claude Monet (1840-1926), he was also a regular Salon exhibitor, and his paintings, such as *Meeting of the Jury* (before 1885, Fig. 39), were typically defined by a careful and balanced composition, a distinct and often dramatic vanishing point, and a quasi-Impressionist execution; attributes that Santa María incorporated into his own canvas. In this painting, as well as in *The Tea* (1890), discussed below, he conflates a variety of thematic and stylistic influences, which is a reflection of how Santa María, more so than any other Colombian artist, was exposed to a great number of alternative currents, at least partly as a result of his independence.

Depictions of the working class were common in French painting, as were representations of the *flâneur* or "purposeful male stroller,"¹⁰³ and other types of street wanderers and performers. Cano, who had explored the theme of the working class, also represented vagabonds; however he did so in an informal manner, by recording them in his travel book, *Apuntes de Viaje: Medellín, Paris 1897-1899*.¹⁰⁴ In this book Cano features anonymous beggars, laundresses, travelers, and carriage drivers. His sketch of a

¹⁰³ Herbert, in *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society*, 34, explains how the *flâneur* was "almost always a dandy," distinguished by his "...aloof manner, fastidious dress, absorption in newspapers and current gossip, and strolling along public thoroughfares..."

¹⁰⁴ Cano, *Apuntes de Viaje: Medellín, Paris 1897-1899*.

woman sitting alone and bored in a café with a drink on the table demonstrates the extent to which he recorded and absorbed all that he saw, and the extent to which he was impressed by the characters of modern Parisian life (Fig. 40).

A spirit of inquiry is also reflected in these drawings, which were probably of little or no interest to the Colombian public or critics, but which provided for Cano an opportunity to explore different subject matters. Similar to Garay, who represented his artistic enclave in humorous caricatures, Cano explored street life in these drawings, representing the banality and intrigue of everyday Parisian life. That these thematic explorations resulted in drawings, a lesser and more informal medium than painting, reveals how untraditional subjects, and especially those that did not reflect the tastes of Colombian patrons, were relegated to lower art forms. More importantly, they reveal how even pensioned artists managed to find ways to steer away from the traditionalist path, as Cano did in these drawings.

One of the strongest references to French painting in Colombian representations of workers can be seen in Santa María's interpretation of Millet's *The Gleaners* (1857) which he assigned the same title, *The Gleaners* (1895) (Figs. 41 and 42).¹⁰⁵ Although Millet's work received mixed reviews when exhibited at the Salon of 1857, the painting steadily gained popularity in the ensuing decades. By the time Santa María painted his version of *The Gleaners* in 1895, Millet's painting had been widely reproduced and exhibited.¹⁰⁶ In composition, Santa María borrows from Millet's horizon line that

¹⁰⁵ Many scholars, including Serrano; Barnitz; and Beatriz González in *Andrés de Santa María (1860-1945): un precursor solitario* (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 1998) have discussed Santa María's work with relation to French Realism, and particularly to Millet.

¹⁰⁶ The popularity of this canvas increased significantly after Millet's death, when a retrospective of his work was organized in 1885, and when "the fears of a potentially disgruntled or revolutionary force in the countryside," with which *The Gleaners* had originally been associated, were diminished. (Liani Vardi, "Construing the Harvest: Gleaners, Farmers, and Officials in Early Modern France," *The American*

encompasses three figures. In Santa María's version, the women are depicted against an Andean backdrop and are dressed as natives of the Colombian highlands, with their distinctive shawls and hats. This scene of labor does not depict the grueling realism and unidealized representations of Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), rather, it is a sentimental representation of gleaners at work.¹⁰⁷

Santa María not only sentimentalized the theme of labor, but gave it a particular location as well. In so doing, he made this painting acceptable and enjoyable for Colombian critics such as Baldomero Sanín Cano, who admired the canvas for its tranquility and harmony, but, above all, for its regionalism.¹⁰⁸ The subject, however, is probably a fabrication since Santa María was largely raised in Europe and was unlikely to have been in contact with the somewhat closed communities of the highlands. Santa María, then, chose to romanticize Colombian culture as a European would, perhaps demonstrating the irreconcilable differences found in this type of cross-cultural exchange, a result of the artist's dual nationality.

Historical Review 98, no. 5 (December 1993): 1426). Millet's canvas was also popular in the United States as a result of its nostalgia. For an extended discussion on this, see Laura L. Meixner, "Popular Criticism of Jean-François Millet in Nineteenth-Century America," *The Art Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (March 1983): 94-105.

¹⁰⁷ Although Millet and Courbet are considered Realists, Millet was associated with the Barbizon School of Fontainebleau, as opposed to Courbet who lived in Paris and represented the subjects of his native Ornans. Millet typically represented rural workers with a sense of nostalgia and sentimentality, as well as in a stable and classical composition, different from Courbet, whose peasants were physically grotesque and compositions awkward. For an extended discussion on Barbizon artists, see Robert L. Herbert, *Barbizon Revisited* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1962).

¹⁰⁸ Baldomero Sanín Cano, "El Impresionismo en Bogotá," *Revista contemporánea* 1, no. 4 (January 1905): 361.

French Traditions:

Decorative Painting and Art Nouveau

The modern poster, a new commercial art form in the late nineteenth century that featured vibrant colors and simple designs, was born out of the expansion of printing techniques and was, in large part, a response to the Japanese woodblock prints that had been newly introduced to the European public.¹⁰⁹ The rise in popularity of posters coincided with Art Nouveau, a dominant international style known for its curvilinear and free-flowing forms.¹¹⁰ The expressive freedom and versatility of this style attracted the attention of a variety of artists, including architects, jewelers, glass artists, ceramic artists, and graphic illustrators. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), one of the best-known artists to integrate aspects of Art Nouveau into his poster art, represented the dance movements of a can-can dancer, Jane Avril, in flowing and sinuous forms (Fig. 43). These distinctive posters, which were visible throughout Paris, featured the graceful forms of the Art Nouveau movement, as well as the distinct flatness that was characteristic of Japanese prints.

Art Nouveau modernized the field of graphic illustration, not only in France but also in Colombia. Similar to the way Impressionism had introduced artists to a new way of representing light and form in painting, the modern poster revolutionized the layout, typography, content, and illustrations of the printed press. Art Nouveau was a dominant

¹⁰⁹ These prints formed part of the larger impact of Japanese aesthetics on Western art, known as *Japonisme*, and discussed at greater length in Siegfried Wichmann's *Japonisme: The Japanese Influence on Western Art in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Harmony Books, 1981).

¹¹⁰ For more information on Art Nouveau see Paul Greenhalgh, ed. *Art Nouveau, 1890–1914* (London: V&A Publications, 2000).

style in Europe, known as *Jugendstil* in Germany, the Arts and Crafts Movement in England, and *Modernisme* in Spain. The appropriation of this style by Colombian artists, such as Cano and Tobón Mejía, demonstrates their appropriation of avant-garde trends, which were prevalent not only in France, but throughout Europe. It also demonstrates their acceptance of the popular arts as a valuable form of artistic expression.

The magazine *Lectura y Arte*, published in 1903 by Cano, Tobón Mejía, and other collaborators, provides the clearest indication of how the aesthetics of the Art Nouveau poster permeated the graphic arts in Colombia. Dated much later than *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*, the illustrations and typography of *Lectura y Arte* were deeply informed by this avant-garde aesthetic. The title of the publication, as seen on the cover of the No. 9 & 10 issue, is rendered in *Lectura y Arte*'s iconic font, characterized by curved and angular letters that engage with each other in the composition and are represented in different sizes and styles (Fig. 44). The “e” and “a” in the word “Lectura” for example appear very different than those in the word “Arte,” revealing the variety and inventiveness that these artists introduced to the Colombian illustrated press. This emphasis on typography is also seen in Cano’s monogrammed signature with its distinctly curved and decorative “FAC” (Fig. 45). The cover, drawn by Cano, features a woman’s unrealistically long skirt flowing down the picture plane, toward a vase of flowers that in reality would have tumbled down such an inclined floor. The odd perspective of this image, the recessed pictured plane, the intentional use of bright color, and the exaggerated clothes of the woman recall the representations of Jane Avril by Toulouse-Lautrec or Japanese prints, and demonstrate how illustrators were, like painters, moving away from realism and towards a more creative visual vocabulary.

Decorative painting, as practiced by former Académie Julian students and Nabi painters Maurice Denis and Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), was based on the idea that paintings were no longer illusionistic windows into nature, but rather fields for decorative motifs.¹¹¹ This concept had an important influence on the work of Cano and Valenzuela, who absorbed certain formalist aspects from the Nabis, primarily the use of boldly contrasting colors and a flattened picture plane, as well as the introduction of patterns and motifs found in Japanese woodblock prints. This type of decorative painting, which Colombian artists brought back to Colombia, helped expand the limits of painting, since just the presence of these canvases, whether in private or institutional hands, would have alerted emerging artists of these new and alternative forms of painting.

Cano's special admiration for decorative painting was elucidated in a 1916 interview in which he described it as "...[the type of painting] that best fits my artistic taste."¹¹² He added, in the same interview, however, that an artist's versatility is integral to his success, making it clear that he painted in more than just this genre. Indeed, the demands of the art market and the tastes of patrons demanded a flexibility on the part of Cano and other Colombian artists; yet these artists managed to insert their individual tastes within their works. In Cano's *The Virgin of the Lillies* (1908, Fig. 46), a religious-themed painting, the flatness and frontal pose of the Virgin and use of ornamental motifs, such as the relief sculpture, gold halo, and patterned tiles behind the Virgin, are closer to

¹¹¹ For an extended discussion on decorative painting, see Gloria Lynn Groom, *Beyond the Easel: Decorative Paintings by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis, and Roussel, 1890-1930* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2001).

¹¹² "que mas se acomoda a mi gusto artístico." "Jack," 12.

decorative painting, while the subject matter helps maintain a level of sobriety that is typically expected of this genre.¹¹³

Cano's portraits also demonstrate his preferences for decorative painting. In the example of Carolina Cárdenas Núñez (1925, Fig. 47), Cano negates the illusion of depth by incorporating an elaborate and floral design in the background, and a patterned tablecloth in the foreground, thus transforming the painting into a type of decorative object. This idea that a canvas could serve a decorative function reflected the Nabis' philosophy that a picture was essentially a flat surface and that it therefore did not have to give the illusion of depth.¹¹⁴ This novel concept, which Cano did not adopt until twenty years after the Nabis, demonstrates the small, yet significant steps that Colombian artists made towards modernizing painting in their country. Although Cano remained faithful to the ideals of illusionism in his religious subjects and portraits, he nevertheless introduced innovative ideas more aligned with decorative painting, like a compressed picture plane and an emphasis on pattern and ornament, to Colombian painting.

Like Cano, Valenzuela was another Colombian artist who experimented with the floral patterning and bold colors of decorative painting. Valenzuela lived a privileged life, traveling to Italy, first as a child to complete his high school education, and later as an adult to study painting from 1890 to 1899, and again from 1903 to 1910. A portrait of Valenzuela painted by Garay in 1900 represents the artist, approximately 23 years old, in what was presumably his studio (Fig. 48). Valenzuela holds his cello and wears a tilted

¹¹³ Although this canvas, *The Virgin of the Lillies*, demonstrates Cano's ability to consolidate the tastes of his patrons with his own artistic proclivities, this was not necessarily the case in the majority of his religious commissions—which were many.

¹¹⁴ Denis articulated this idea in 1890 in his "Definition of Neotraditionism," in which he stated: "It is well to remember that a picture -- before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote -- is essentially a plane surface covered with colors assembled in a certain order." Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 94.

hat, gazing directly at the viewer, his pose indicative of the confidence of an established artist. In the background are numerous framed and unframed paintings and drawings, and on the left is the artist's palette. The cello, along with the other props speaks to the artist's dual role as both musician and painter. Garay's choice of sketchy brushwork illustrates, quite literally, Valenzuela as a modern artist.

Despite Garay's promotion of Valenzuela through his portrait, Valenzuela is not mentioned typically in survey books of Colombian art. Colombian scholars have noted his lack of participation within the Colombian art community, and particularly his lack of affiliation with the Escuela de Bellas Artes; unlike most established Colombian artists, he never served as professor or director there.¹¹⁵ Although Valenzuela was known for his reclusive lifestyle, keeping mostly in seclusion in his studio, he did exhibit in Bogotá at the national exhibitions of 1899 and 1910. The first posthumous exhibition of his work, curated in 1999 by Beatriz González, formed part of a series of exhibitions organized by the Museo Nacional de Colombia through which unknown artists, like Valenzuela, were "discovered" and inserted into a narrative of Colombian art.¹¹⁶

Valenzuela's *Portrait of Helena Carrizosa de Valenzuela* is a portrait of the artist's mother painted in 1910 (Fig. 49). While Beatriz González has compared Valenzuela's *Portrait of Helena Carrizosa de Valenzuela* to Umberto Boccioni's *La signora Virginia* of 1905 (Fig. 51), differences in composition, pose, and décor call to question the pairing of these two works.¹¹⁷ Whereas Valenzuela represents a balanced and

¹¹⁵ María Cristina Pignalosa, "El secreto mundo de Carlos Valenzuela," *El Tiempo* (May 6, 1999): n.p.

¹¹⁶ Beatriz González, *¿Quién es Carlos Valenzuela?* (Bogotá: Museo Nacional, Ministerio de Cultura, 1999).

closed composition, Boccioni places the sitter off center and extends the background into the bedroom behind her. Boccioni's interior is also sober and devoid of any decorative motif, oriental or otherwise. Although Valenzuela was living in Italy during this time and would have been familiar with Boccioni's work, the affinities between Valenzuela's portrait and Boccioni's are untenable. A more compelling comparison to Valenzuela's *Portrait of Helena Carrizosa de Valenzuela* is made with William Merritt Chase's *Portrait of Dora Wheeler* (1882-1883, Fig. 50). The compositions are similar in that both women have the same hand gesture and seated pose, and the chair and side table have the same diagonal arrangement. The bright palette, floral motifs, and oriental décor of Valenzuela's portrait further recall Chase's canvas.

Chase's *Portrait of Dora Wheeler* was a particularly popular painting in Europe and the United States, and was used "as an 'exhibition piece,' advertising Chase's talent as a painter."¹¹⁸ The canvas was first shown in Paris at the Salon of 1883, then in Munich at the Internationale Kunstausstellung of 1883, and later in New York at the 1884 exhibition of the Society of American Artists. This work helped establish Chase's reputation as an international artist and made this painting particularly recognizable for any artist living in Europe.¹¹⁹ Influenced by James Abbot McNeill Whistler's (1834-1903) style of decorative painting, known as Aestheticism, and in keeping with Dora

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 14-15.

¹¹⁸ Ronald G. Pisano, *William Merritt Chase: the complete catalogue of known and documented work by William Merritt Chase (1849-1916)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 51.

¹¹⁹ According to W.M.M., in "Portrait of Miss Dora Wheeler by William Merritt Chase," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 9, no. 3 (March 1922): 39, "it is upon the Wheeler painting and the portraits of the Piloty children that Chase's European fame largely rests."

Wheeler's role as a prominent designer of embroidered textiles, Chase emphasized the decorative aspects of painting, and thus, its inherent flatness.¹²⁰

Whereas Valenzuela's portrait of his mother speaks directly to the aesthetics of decorative painting, as evidenced in its floral patterns and bright palette, his *Portrait of Julio Valenzuela*, depicting his father, is more subdued and traditional (Fig. 52). Still, there are a number of similarities between the paintings. Aside from the obvious correspondence in the choice of subject matter, both are compositionally similar, with vertical orientations of a single parent figure within domestic settings. Stylistically, however, the paintings differ in choice of palette and iconography as a way of illustrating each of the parent's personalities. Valenzuela's mother is seated casually in a parlor with books by her side looking directly towards the viewer in a relaxed and almost welcoming manner, while the artist's father is shown reading, in a library or living room, immersed in his book and indifferent to his surroundings. Whereas the mother's parlor is bright and decorated in floral patterns, the father's library is more somber with its solid patches of rich reds and blues. Julio Valenzuela sits in a room that matches his serious character, devoid of bright colors or lively patterns. In these portraits, Valenzuela uses color and composition not only to define the sitter, but also to differentiate between these two very different personalities.

It seems that Valenzuela has glorified his mother's presence in his visual references to Chase's well-known *Portrait of Dora Wheeler*. In this regard, the style of *Portrait of Elena Carrizosa de Valenzuela* serves as a strategy by which Valenzuela could have ascribed a sense of importance to both his mother and his work as a whole. One

¹²⁰ According to Linda Merrill, in *After Whistler: The Artist and His Influence on American Paintings* (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2003), 22, Chase was "the most vocal advocate of Whistlerian aestheticism."

could only assume that in 1910, when both portraits of Valenzuela's parents were exhibited in Bogotá, the public would have been struck, as I was, by the juxtaposition of the fresh, colorful, and innovative style of one canvas, and the seriousness and sobriety of the other. This contrast would have served as an unfortunate reminder of the conservatism with which portraiture had traditionally been associated, and, in turn, as an optimistic indication of what the future of this genre could be.

French Traditions:

The Techniques of Impressionism

The first Impressionist exhibition took place in 1874 in Paris and marked the first prominent public display of this new manner of painting. Characterized by its visible and sketchy brushstrokes, and its use of color in a pure and unmixed form, French Impressionism was largely defined by its technique. As described by John House:

it is in the relationship between the sketches and the finished paintings that our understanding of the Impressionists' art must be based...[since] they kept these two types of painting in a sort of equilibrium, parading the virtuosity of their *esquisses* [sketches] alongside their more elaborated canvases.¹²¹

With regards to subject matter, the Impressionists favored non-historical subjects and genre scenes, as well as urban and rural landscapes. Outside of France, however, Impressionism took on a different meaning, and in many countries, like Colombia,

¹²¹ John House, *Impressionism: Paint and Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 68.

Impressionism had no modern precedent and its introduction in the country invigorated painting with a new sense of dynamism, emotion, and artistic freedom.

In Colombia, as in many Latin American countries, this style did not gain acceptance until the early 1900s. Parisian-trained artists such as Cano, Acevedo Bernal, Santa María, Eugenio Zerda (1878-1945) and Eugenio Peña (1860-1944), were some of the earliest Impressionist painters in Colombia. These artists utilized the visual vocabulary of Impressionism, primarily the quick brushwork, pure colors, and thick buildup of paint, to endow their canvases with a sense of spontaneity. In contrast, landscape painters such as Ricardo Borrero Álvarez and Jesus María Zamora (1875-1949) replicated these techniques, but their canvases were characterized by a sense of nationalism that was not seen in the other Impressionist-inspired works by their contemporaries. According to Norma Broude, the ability:

to record directly out-of-doors the unique and particularized light of the homeland, to articulate in painting the special character of its landscapes, both rural and urban, was to celebrate and to affirm their country's national identity in specifically and often self-consciously political ways.¹²²

Setting aside the nationalist agendas of Colombian landscape painters, my intention is to focus on the influence of Impressionism on figurative painting, particularly on portraiture, since this was a major component of the artistic production of many artists, including Garay, Cano, Santa María, and Acevedo Bernal.

In order to better understand how the ideas of Impressionism permeated Colombian art, it is important to first start on the other side of the spectrum with the work of Garay. Garay, stylistically the most conservative of these artists, is also the most

¹²² Broude, *World Impressionism*, 30.

unlikely Colombian artist to be associated with Impressionism. In fact, he is rarely labeled an Impressionist, and while major scholars from Marta Traba to Beatriz González have defined him as an Academic painter and social portrait artist of the Regeneración, they have avoided discussing incongruities in his work.¹²³ Because these works where Garay deviated from his “Academism” have been overlooked, I prefer to focus on them here as well as on the special circumstances that permitted him to do so. When representing his social circle, for example, as in *Portrait of Carlos Valenzuela* (1900), Garay was accepting of modern stylistic innovations, as evidenced in the lighter palette and sketchier brushwork of this canvas (Fig. 48).

In the work of Acevedo Bernal, the influence of Impressionism can also be best appreciated in the intimate portraits he painted of his friends and family. Acevedo Bernal’s *Portrait of Blanca Tenorio de Acevedo* (1896, Fig. 53) and his *Portrait of Rosa Biester de Acevedo* (1905, Fig. 54) are representations of his first and second wife, respectively. The first, painted in New York before he went to Paris, was done in pastel and represents his first wife in a very tender and casual manner, with an off-the-shoulder shawl and curly hair highlighted by lightly colored strokes. Carmen Ortega Ricaurte argues that Acevedo Bernal first came into contact with Impressionism, in New York where he was drawn especially to the light palette and the dissolution of rigid lines of the style.¹²⁴ More specifically, Ortega Ricaurte suggests that Acevedo Bernal studied under

¹²³ Marta Traba, *Historia abierta del arte colombiano* (Cali: La Tertulia, 1974; reprint, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1984); and González, *El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX*.

¹²⁴ Carmen Ortega Ricaurte, *Diccionario de artistas en Colombia* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janes, 1979), 14.

American Impressionist William Merritt Chase and that he attended in 1894 the Art Students League, one of the many institutions in which Chase taught.¹²⁵

While Acevedo Bernal's *Portrait of Blanca Tenorio de Acevedo* adopts few aspects of Impressionism, his portrait of his second wife, painted almost ten years later, is clearly Impressionist. *Portrait of Rosa Biester de Acevedo*, painted during Acevedo Bernal's time in Paris, is made in a distinctly modern style characterized by sketchy brushwork and an application of pure color, rendered in a nontraditional and vertical format. The woman's direct gaze, prominent feathered hat, long fur wrap, tightly fitted clothes, and confident gesture endow this portrait with a sense of authority. Considered a revolutionary canvas by Traba, this portrait stands in direct opposition to the static and stately portraiture of Garay and is instead reflective of the future of portraiture in the early twentieth century.¹²⁶ Different from Garay's *Portrait of Rafael Núñez* (Fig. 9) for example, Acevedo Bernal's *Portrait of Rosa Biester de Acevedo* emphasizes personality and attitude. Whereas Garay places particular emphasis on the library setting, which defines the sitter as a well-educated and cultured leader, Acevedo Bernal focuses on the figure's personality and confident gesture. By placing the figure prominently in the picture plane and in disregarding the setting altogether, Acevedo Bernal establishes character and emotion, rather than social standing, like Garay.

¹²⁵ Ibid. Since I could not find Bernal's registry at the Archives of the Art Students League, New York or at the Archives of American Art, New York, I cannot prove that Bernal registered at the Art Students League. It is important to mention however that Carmen Ortega Ricarte is not the only scholar to make such a speculation; I have also found newspaper articles that make a similar claim, but that unfortunately are not dated. For more information on Chase's educational role see Annette Blaugrund, *The Tenth Street Studio Building: Artist-Entrepreneurs from the Hudson River School to the American Impressionists* (Southampton, N.Y.: Parrish Art Museum, 1997).

¹²⁶ Traba, 77-78 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

Cano was not only an Impressionist painter, like Acevedo Bernal, but he was also an important defender of this style and of its practitioners, primarily of Santa María. In 1903 for instance, Cano wrote in *Lectura y Arte*:

I confess that the colorist palette is quite seductive...but I am one of those who in addition to that asks for the presence of forms, if human better, and if they express the generous sentiment of men, more greatness I find in my pleasure.¹²⁷

A strong defender of the coloristic effects and broken colors of Impressionism, Cano also believed that painting should remain figurative and that it should not be abstract. Although this partiality to figurative painting was a personal preference for Cano, it also helped that it corresponded with the portraiture demands of his clientele in Colombia.

Cano's *The Seamstress* (1924, Fig. 39) is a good indication of how Impressionism affected his artistic production, as seen in the sketchy and visible brushwork, and lack of linear definition. Cano's earlier work, as seen in *Girl With the Roses* (1904, Fig. 55), was more conservative in style, and although it retained certain painterly qualities, it also adhered to the Academic principles of painting, principally volume and perspective. Although the girl is situated in an outdoor and brightly lit scene, the light does not seem to dissolve the form, as in Impressionism, and the brushwork remains seamless, in opposition to the *esquisse* aesthetics mentioned earlier by House. Cano's *Girl with the Roses*, like Acevedo Bernal's *Portrait of Blanca Tenorio de Acevedo*, demonstrate the ability of Colombian painters to modernize academic painting, while at the same time resist a purely Impressionist interpretation.

¹²⁷ "Confieso que es sobrado seductora la paleta del colorista ...pero soy de los que piden además de eso la visión de formas, si humanas, mejor, y si impresionan el sentimiento generoso del hombre, mayor grandeza encuentro en mi placer." Francisco A. Cano, "Un artista," *Lectura y Arte*, no. 7/8 (November 1903): 128.

As a critic, Cano was open to new trends, like Impressionism, and was also willing to accept certain modern artists regarded as rebellious like Édouard Manet (1832-1883). In proclaiming his admiration for Spanish painting, particularly the dark tonalities of Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez (1599-1660), Cano was able to validate his appreciation for Manet.¹²⁸ In accepting the aesthetics of Impressionism, but requiring that painting remain figurative, and in aligning Manet to Spanish influences, Cano was making the types of cultural adjustments that Colombian artists commonly made after their time in Paris. Cano did not simply reject Impressionism, but instead absorbed certain elements, like quick and visible brushstrokes – seen in *The Seamstress*, and rejected others, like the complete dissolution of form. This small, yet progressive, step impacted the next generation of artists in Colombia who were able to push the envelope even further with complete abstraction.

As opposed to Cano and Garay, who traveled to Paris on government scholarship, Santa María traveled on private funds, allowing him to pursue his career in painting freely. After his father's death, he enrolled in 1883 at the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts. Santa María's art education, however, was not limited to this one institution. In fact, Eduardo Serrano has argued that Santa María studied under Alfred Roll, and that he frequently visited the area of Montmartre, where he came in contact with Impressionism and its practitioners.¹²⁹ Santa María was also influenced by his mentor Henri Gervex and, later in his career, by the Symbolist paintings of Fernand Khnopff and the sculptural work of Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929). Although Santa María's artistic career extended past

¹²⁸ Francisco A. Cano, *Notas artísticas*, ed. Miguel Escobar Calle (Medellín: Ediciones Extensión Cultural Departamental, 1987) features a compilation of Cano's writings on art and artists, including his views on Impressionism, Spanish painting, and contemporary artists like Epifanio Garay and Andrés de Santa María.

¹²⁹ Serrano, 19.

Impressionism and towards Symbolism and Expressionism, I focus here on his early Realist and Impressionist phase since it coincides with his years in Bogotá and because it encapsulates his most influential contributions to Colombian art, through the exhibitions and institutional changes he initiated at the Escuela de Bellas Artes.¹³⁰

Santa María's *The Reading* (1886, Fig. 56) is one of his earliest domestic scenes. Like Impressionist Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), who recorded her sister and family mainly indoors in their Parisian apartment, Santa María also painted domestic scenes of his family, particularly his wife and children. *The Child's Bath* (1904, Fig. 57), which features Santa María's wife preparing to bathe their child, demonstrates the strong thematic and compositional similarities between the work of Santa María and Cassatt. *The Reading*, similar in subject to Cassatt's *Woman Reading* (1878-1879, Fig. 58), was not painted in a sketchy manner or with a light palette like Cassatt's. Compositionally, however, the canvases are similar, since Santa María has represented the reader in a profile view, maintaining a similar sense of intimacy despite a difference in space. Santa María's *The Child's Bath*, like Cassatt's *The Child's Bath* (1893, Fig. 59), is represented from the unconventional viewpoint of an adult looking down at the mother and child scene, a characteristic that was common among Impressionists and Cassatt in particular.¹³¹ Most likely Santa María would have been familiar with Cassatt's numerous

¹³⁰ *Andrés de Santa María: nuevos testimonios, nueva visión* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1989) discusses at greater length the late paintings of Santa María, which until 1989 had been largely neglected by scholars because they mostly remained in Belgian and other overseas collections.

¹³¹ Griselda Pollock, in "Modernity and the spaces of femininity," *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988), 70-127, has interpreted the work of Cassatt, and particularly the compression of space and proximity in viewpoint as a reflection of sexual differences. If one were to apply this feminist reading to Santa María's *The Bath*, then one could perhaps interpret the painter's perspective as a reflection of male superiority over both woman and child, in accordance with his role as the patriarch of the family.

prints, pastels, and paintings on this same theme.¹³² Furthermore, Cassatt was part of the Impressionist group, and consequently exhibited widely in Paris and at four of the eight Impressionist exhibitions, which Santa María most likely attended.¹³³

The Tea (1890, Fig. 60), of this same period, has also been compared by scholars, particularly by Eduardo Serrano, to examples in French painting, and specifically to Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1880-1881, Fig. 61).¹³⁴ Other scholars, such as Carolina Ponce de León and Jorge Gómez y Cáceres, have compared this canvas to *Memories* (1889, Fig. 62) by Belgian symbolist Fernand Khnopff.¹³⁵ Both Renoir's and Khnopff's painting seem to have been an important reference for Santa María, and with regard to the latter, this influence is best appreciated in Santa María's choice of setting, a tennis court. In terms of mood, however, *The Tea* does not compare to Khnopff's painting, but rather to Renoir's. Like *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, Santa María represents friends gathered casually around a meal in a sunlit and semi-outdoor setting. The scattered chairs and their irregular placement around the table, the lack of centralization in the picture, and the unusual cropping of the man at left and woman at right, further reveal Santa María's attempt at Impressionism.

As discussed in the next chapter, these Impressionist canvases, as well as Santa María's directorship, were particularly influential in the acceptance of Impressionism in Colombia. At the exhibition of 1910 in Bogotá, the last exhibition in which Santa María

¹³² Although Santa María's work has been discussed with relation to French Realism, particularly to the work of Jean-François Millet, and French Impressionism, there has yet to be a scholar to have published on the similarities between Santa María's work and Cassatt's.

¹³³ For more information on Mary Cassatt and her exhibition history, see Nancy Mowll Mathews, ed, *Mary Cassatt: A Retrospective* (New York: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc., 1996).

¹³⁴ Serrano, *Andrés de Santa María*, 31.

¹³⁵ Carolina Ponce de León and Jorge Gómez y Cáceres, "Cronología comparada" in *Andrés de Santa María: nuevos testimonios, nueva visión*, 11.

participated, the artist showed *Portrait of María Mancini on Horseback* (Fig. 63), a canvas that, as discussed in the following chapter, pushed the limits of Colombian painting even further. Introducing the use of a palette knife to create more expressive paint strokes and the implementation of a strong diagonal to give the canvas a sense of dynamism, Santa María again shocked his viewers, as well as alerted artists of the compositional and stylistic changes that had occurred more than twenty years prior in Europe, particularly in the work of Post-Impressionist painters such as Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), but that in Colombia were considered novel.

Because Santa María emerged and matured as an artist in Paris, free from financial or governmental preoccupations, his adoption of Impressionism was significantly more radical and adventurous than that of the other artists. Santa María was perhaps the strongest advocate of the Impressionist style in Colombia and was certainly one of the most influential in introducing it to this country.¹³⁶ Unlike Cano and Acevedo Bernal, Santa María was able to break from the illusionistic traditions of painting with more ease and freedom because he benefitted from economic stability, exclusive European training and artistic connections, and the prestige of having exhibited at numerous Parisian Salons. These advantages account for the prominence and elevation of Santa María's work, almost to the exclusion of other artists. While one must recognize Santa María's contribution to Colombian art, however, it is equally important to remember that he was not single-handedly responsible for providing European models. Rather, it was a

¹³⁶ Traba was one of the earliest scholars to position Santa María as the first modern painter of Colombia. Following her lead, Serrano also capitulated on Santa María's Impressionist influence in *Andrés de Santa María* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1971) and *Andrés de Santa María: pintor colombiano de resonancia universal*. Beatriz González, in her essay "Andrés de Santa María: un precursor solitario," in *Andrés de Santa María (1860-1945): un precursor solitario* further elaborated on Santa María's uniqueness and individualism. In agreement with these scholars, who have rightfully pointed this out and discussed it at length, I also believe that other artists, such as Acevedo Bernal and Cano, should be incorporated into this discussion on Impressionism and Colombian art.

collaborative effort between him and other Colombian artists, such as Cano and Acevedo Bernal, who all shared a vision and desire for change.

In fact, Santa María's work fits best, as demonstrated in this chapter, within the context of a European avant-garde. Unlike Garay, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal, who lived in Paris for a limited time, with a defined mission and under a strict budget, Santa María was able to explore novelties more freely. Even Garay, the most conservative in the group, was able to absorb the brushwork and palette of Impressionism; however, he did so cautiously and only when it suited the moment or his sitter, as in *Portrait of Carlos Valenzuela*. Cano and Acevedo Bernal were more consistent with their adaptation of Impressionism, replicating the sketchy brushwork of this style, while still maintaining volume and clarity. Even when Cano was stylistically conservative, as in *The Last Drop*, he proved to be daring and adventurous in subject matter.

This group of Colombian artists in Paris, some of the earliest to come into contact with the female nude, caricature, graphic illustrations, decorative painting, Art Nouveau, Impressionism, and other avant-garde styles, not only incorporated these lessons into their work and teachings, but more importantly opened up their mother country, which had remained largely hermetic throughout much of the century, to these external influences. These seeds of change, which were planted in Paris, were then cultivated in Bogotá, where they were passed down in the classes and exhibition spaces of the Escuela de Bellas Artes to the next generation of Colombian artists to adopt and develop.

Chapter 3

Exhibiting in Paris and Bogotá

While some of the paintings that the artists of this study completed abroad were exhibited in Paris, the majority were shown in exhibitions organized by the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá. For the artists who exhibited in both cities, sometimes showing the same painting, the reception of their work differed significantly from one country to the other. Bogotá tended to be much more conservative both politically and morally than Paris.

Through its focus on the artists' exhibited works and a comparison of the receptions both in Paris and Bogotá, I demonstrate the ways in which Colombian artists

negotiated these cultural differences not only in painting, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, but also in their exhibition practices both abroad and in Colombia. To ground the reader, I first explore the trajectory of art criticism in Colombia and highlight the limitations that Colombian artists faced when exhibiting their work abroad. These limitations were not only a result of Colombia's minimal international presence, especially at universal expositions, but also because of the competitiveness of the Parisian art world.

Art Criticism in Colombia and France

In Colombia just as elsewhere, art criticism began with novelists, poets, writers, and artists writing about art. Although most of these early critics were not specialists in the field, or even necessarily well-versed in the artistic styles of the period, they nevertheless expressed their views publicly and influenced the opinions of the general public. As one might expect, these pioneering critiques lacked a consistency and professionalism, yet they greatly impacted the reputations of certain Colombian artists, such as Santa María, whose surprisingly modern and sophisticated style of painting had shocked viewers in 1899 spurning negative comments. By 1904, however, even the most conservative critic, Jacinto Albarracín (1876-1920) showered Santa María's works with positive attention.

Scholars have traced the early origins of Colombian art criticism, with some, such as Victor Alberto Quinche Ramírez, dating it to the late 1870s after the establishment of

art academies, such as the Academia Gutiérrez.¹ Beatriz González similarly proposes that Colombian art, and consequently its art criticism, emerged after 1875 positing the importation of international art trends to Colombia through the arrival of foreigners to the country as well as the return of foreign-trained artists.² These early travelers, most notably Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, and Santa María, broke with the country's insularity by introducing Impressionism and other new styles and the female nude and other subjects, which in turn, challenged the public's taste and tolerance. The establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes also aided in the development of art criticism as it provided instruction as well as additional venues for art exhibitions. Urdaneta, as the founder of the Academy, as well as Garay, Acevedo Bernal, Cano, and Santa María, as educators and directors of this institution, were particularly influential to Colombian art criticism.

In France, poets and writers, such as Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) and Émile Zola (1840-1902), also tested their skills in art criticism. French art criticism, however, had been around since before 1737 when the French Salon became a regular occurrence, first held bi-annually and then annually. In eighteenth-century France, the Salon-- organized by the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture-- provided an important exhibition space for emerging artists, and one that exposed the work of artists to the general public, vociferous critics, and journalists. As Thomas Crow explains, the Salon empowered the public audience, and as a result:

Painters found themselves being exhorted in the press and in art-critical tracts to address the needs and desires of the exhibition 'public'; the journalists and critics

¹ Victor Alberto Quinche Ramírez, "La crítica de arte en Colombia: los primeros años," *Historia Crítica*, no. 32 (July-December 2006): 285- 286.

² Beatriz González, *El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 2004), 81-82.

who voiced this demand claimed to speak with the backing of this public; state officials responsible for the arts hastened to assert that their decisions had been taken in the public's interest; and collectors began to ask, rather ominously for the artists, which pictures had received the stamp of the public's approval.³

The Salon was not only taken seriously among artists, but within the larger Parisian community, as seen in a caricature by Honoré Daumier (Fig. 64) that satirizes the scandalous presence of Venuses, yet again, at the Salon of 1864, while also demonstrating the appeal these exhibitions had among the *bourgeoisie*. Illustrations such as Daumier's "This Year, Venuses Again...Always Venuses" were not only featured in comic publications such as *Le Charivari*, but also in newspapers, such as *Le Figaro* and *L'Illustration*, further revealing the public interest of these Salon exhibitions.

Throughout the nineteenth century, however, the roles of both the Salon and the École des Beaux-Arts as arbiters of taste diminished in importance. Although these transformations had their beginnings in the late eighteenth century and after the French Revolution when the Salon was first opened to foreigners, it was during the 1848 Revolution that the Salon introduced awards and allowed the acceptance of more works of art in response to accusations about its exclusivity and elitism. In 1863, however, the Salon rejected a large number of entries. In response to this, Napoleon III (1808-1873) ordered the creation of the Salon des Refusés, which displayed the works rejected by the official Salon jury including Edouard Manet's controversial *The Luncheon on the Grass* (1863). This particular exhibition influenced the emergence of other independent exhibition venues in France, eventually leading to the dissolution of the official Salon tradition.⁴

³ Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 1-2.

The government ended its involvement in the Salon in 1881, when its control was handed over to the Société des Artistes Français, headed by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Disappointed in Bouguereau, who represented the antiquated and Academic values of the École, Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes restructured the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1890. In response to the bureaucratic processes and conservative tastes of the jurors, as well as to the jury system itself, other independent exhibitions emerged. Among them, the Salon des Indépendants organized its first non-juried Salon in 1884. The Impressionists, who held eight exhibitions between 1874 and 1886, also adopted more egalitarian measures by accepting a greater number of participants at their first exhibition in 1874, as well as by creating “a system designed to give equal chances for good position and thus eliminate the almost inevitable battles about hanging.”⁵ By the late nineteenth century, French artists were no longer restricted to one exhibition venue, as had been customary, but instead were encouraged to exhibit their work freely and in a variety of venues.⁶ Although the Parisian artistic landscape was changing, in terms of art exhibitions and art education, these transformations were not always made accessible to foreigners, and particularly to Colombians.

⁴ See Alberto Boime, “The Salon des Refusés and the Evolution of Modern Art,” *Art Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 411-426, for an extended discussion of how the Salon des Refusés of 1863 encouraged the growth of avant-garde group shows.

⁵ John Rewald, “1873-1874: The First Group Exhibition (1874) and the Origin of the Word ‘Impressionism,’” in *The History of Impressionism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945; reprint, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), 312 (page citations are to the reprint edition). Despite these measures however, the Impressionists, as argued Rewald, were also looking after their own self-interests and acting under practical considerations.

⁶ In addition to these alternative Salons, there were also private art galleries run by dealers such as Paul Durand-Ruel (1831-1922) and Georges Petit (1856-1920) that provided additional exhibition venues, as well as commercial opportunities. The growth of the art market in nineteenth century France is discussed in greater detail by Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, in *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965).

The Difficulties of Exhibiting in Paris

Unfamiliar with the process of exhibiting at the French Salons and aware that this would be their only trip to Paris, Colombian painters as a rule exercised caution. As a result, they typically exhibited after enrolling in a private art studio such as the Académie Julian, and after receiving formal and live model training. This not only provided them with the technical skills needed to compete, but it also meant that they would be listed in the exhibition catalogue as a pupil of their recognizable French master. This connection with French artists such as Bouguerau and Laurens, both instructors at the Académie Julian, raised the profile of Colombian artists when exhibiting among French participants and gave them a sense of legitimacy, making them seem less foreign or out of place. In addition, they exclusively exhibited canvases that they had completed in Paris under the influence and supervision of their French superiors. Conscious of the competition of exhibiting in Paris, Colombian artists took measures to ensure their acceptance into the Salon, revealing their determination and astuteness.

The most common venues in which Colombian artists, primarily Garay, Moreno, and Santa María, exhibited were at the Salons of the Société des Artistes Français, the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, and the Académie Julian. These institutions also happen to have been the most traditional. Colombian artists rarely exhibited at distinctly avant-garde venues such as the Salon des Indépendants, with the exception of Santa María, whose work was featured at the Salon de l'Union Artistique and the Galerie M.M. Bernheim-Jeune. Even Francisco Oller, who in addition to exhibiting at the Salons of the Société des Artistes Français, exhibited at the 1875 Salon des Refusés. Like Santa María, he had learned of these venues through French, rather than Latin American, contacts,

demonstrating the importance of social networking with both locals and among foreigners.⁷

Although the traditional Salon exhibitions were competitive and particularly challenging for Colombian artists, the progressive and independent ones, such as the Salon des Indépendants, Salon de l'Union Artistique and Salon des Refusés, with less infrastructure and fewer members, were even more inaccessible. Latin American artists, including those from Colombia were also completely excluded from the Impressionist exhibitions, which allowed the participation of only one North American artist, Mary Cassatt, and did not feature one Colombian artist, or for that matter a Latin American.

Restricted in Paris, then, to the more traditionalist exhibition venues, Colombian artists were also limited in their own country to the exhibitions of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá. Aside from Cano, who also showed his work in Medellín, these artists only rarely exhibited elsewhere in Colombia. Proud of their overseas education and achievements, as well as encouraged, on the part of the organizers, to display their work as an expression of national pride, Colombian artists showed almost the entirety of their artistic *oeuvre* in Bogotá. Colombian critics made it a point of pointing out those who had exhibited in the “Salón de París,” (“Salon of Paris”) including Garay, Moreno, Wenceslao de la Guardia, and Santa María, “who has had the honor that his paintings have been received by the Parisian Salon four years in a row.”⁸ Due to a lack of cultural appreciation in Bogotá, which resulted in a limited number of exhibition venues, and as a

⁷ Christopher Lloyd, “Camille Pissarro and Francisco Oller,” in *Francisco Oller, A Realist-Impressionist: an exhibition organized by the Ponce Art Museum to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Puerto Rican painter Francisco Oller (1833-1917)* (Ponce: Museo de Arte de Ponce, 1983), 89-102, discusses the closeness that Oller shared not with Latin American artists necessarily, but rather with the Parisian avant-garde, via the Académie Suisse, and particularly with Camille Pissarro, with whom he shared a common Caribbean heritage, as well as with Gustave Courbet, Edouard Manet, and Paul Cézanne.

⁸ “quien ha tenido el honor de que sus cuadros hayan sido recibidos cuatro años seguidos en el Salón de París.” L.N., “Salón de París,” *La Crónica*, no. 650 (September 7, 1899): n.p.

result of the competitive nature of Paris, Colombian artists were faced with exhibition difficulties both nationally and internationally.

Whereas in France their submission of genre scenes and nude paintings--in the style of contemporary French painting--ensured their acceptance into the Salons of Paris, in Bogotá the critics questioned the innovative subjects and styles of these canvases. At the same time, however, the critics also learned from these examples, and as a result, the exhibitions of the Escuela de Bellas Artes were important sites of contact that greatly influenced the artists who exhibited their work as much as the visitors and critics who critiqued them. In Paris, however, art exhibitions carried an entirely different significance. No longer in their national territory, Colombian artists faced the challenges of acceptance into Parisian Salons, something that proved particularly difficult when considering they were the minority, competing against French participants and other foreigners.

After surpassing the hurdle of acceptance in Paris, Colombian artists were faced with another dilemma – recognition. The work of Colombian artists, and Latin American artists in general, went largely unnoticed. This was due, in large part, to the minimal presence of Latin American artists at these exhibitions in comparison to other French and international artists. According to Urdaneta, the Section of Painting at the Salon des Artistes Français of 1878 included over eighty North American male (and female) artists, in contrast to only eleven male Latin American artists.⁹ Due to the small number of Colombians that exhibited in Paris, I have no other option but to broaden my discussion to include the reception of other Latin Americans in order to demonstrate how works by Latin American artists only garnered the attention of French critics when they diverged

⁹ “El salón de pintura en 1878,” *Los Andes*, no. 2 (June 1878): 17.

from styles and subject matter commonly seen in French painting. Because Latin American nationals largely emulated what they learned in Europe, their presence at the Salon failed to attract any real attention.

Although the exclusivity of the Parisian art world affected all Latin American nationals, Colombian artists were further burdened by the economic and political shortcomings of their country. Problems with funding in conjunction with political instability, repeated civil unrest, premature industrialization, and an incompletely defined nationalist agenda hindered Colombia from participating in universal expositions, and developing a more effective and reputable presence overseas. Those Colombian artists, then, who succeeded in getting their works on exhibition in Paris undertook an extraordinary feat, considering the limitations they faced in comparison to other Latin American nationals, particularly Peruvian and Mexican artists, who participated in universal expositions from as early as 1855 and who also benefitted from a larger presence of their compatriots abroad.

Universal Expositions in Paris and Chicago

One type of exhibition venue in which Colombian artists rarely participated was the universal exposition. During the nineteenth century, these exhibitions—the first of which was held in 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London—took place in Europe and the United States. Against a backdrop of promoting industrial and mechanical progress, these exhibitions were typically open to both national and foreign participation. The Exposition Universelle of 1855 in Paris was the first to include fine art, which thereafter was

incorporated into the program of each exposition. It is in this particular category where Colombia's image faltered the most, as it typically failed to submit examples of contemporary fine art in stark comparison to other Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Argentina, and Mexico.¹⁰ Unlike European artists, however, who typically exhibited their artworks inside a gallery devoted to the fine arts, Latin American artists typically displayed their works inside the pavilion of their respective country.

The rare presence of the works of Colombian artists at these universal expositions was countered by abundant displays of Colombia's pre-Hispanic artifacts, as well as its agricultural and mineral resources. Although these were displayed with great pride internationally, internally, Colombia presented an alternate view of itself, which according to Frédéric Martínez was:

a sincerely Hispanic and Catholic version of the origins of the nation, keeping complete silence over its pre-Columbian origins. [In fact,] the erudite Americanism in which collectors and studious Colombians began to participate in, does not reach the least diffusion in society, outside of the 600 people that see the already mentioned collection of pre-Columbian objects exhibited in the house of Vicente Restrepo before his departure for Madrid [for the Columbian Historical Exposition in 1892].¹¹

This representation of Colombia on an international stage further strengthened the primitive view that Europeans already had of Colombia, as well as provided an inconsistent and inaccurate depiction of the country. Even more importantly, this

¹⁰ At the Exposition Universelle of 1889 for example, Latin American nationals, like Arturo Michelena exhibited for Venezuela, Eduardo Sívori and Eduardo Schiaffino for Argentina, and José María Jara (1866-1939), Leandro Izaguirre (1867-1941), and José María Velasco (1840-1912) represented Mexico.

¹¹ “una versión francamente hispanista y católica de los orígenes de la nación, guardando completo silencio sobre sus orígenes precolombinos. El americanismo erudito en el que empiezan a participar coleccionistas y estudiosos colombianos no alcanza la menor difusión en la sociedad, fuera de las seiscientas personas que ven la ya mencionada colección de objetos precolombinos expuestas en la casa de Vicente Restrepo antes de su salida para Madrid.” Frédéric Martínez, “Cómo representar a Colombia? De las exposiciones universales a la Exposición del Centenario, 1851-1910,” in *Museo, memoria y nación: misión de los museos nacionales para los ciudadanos del futuro*, eds. Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez and María Emma Wills Obregón (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2000), 326.

misrepresentation reflected the greater problem of how to represent a country, both at home and abroad, with such a complex historical past, as well as with such a culturally and racially diverse populace.

In regard to contemporary painting, the art works belonging to Colombia's pre-Columbian cultures were a source of competition and not a fount of inspiration as they were in other Latin American countries such as Mexico and Peru. In these places, the exaltation of pre-Columbian peoples, also known as "indigenism," was reflected in the *oeuvre* of many nineteenth and twentieth-century artists; even before Diego Rivera (1886-1957) and others of the Mexican Muralist Movement referred to various pre-Columbian cultures in their works.¹² In Peru, Francisco Laso was one of the earliest proponents of indigenism, as well as one of the few Latin American artists at the Exposition Universelle of 1855 to participate in the exhibition.¹³ Colombian artists, in contrast, did not celebrate the indigenous people of Colombia until the 1930s when the Bachué indigenist movement finally took off.¹⁴

Although Colombians did not visually represent the native people of their country in painting, they did address their indigenous heritage, through the display of large numbers of archeological remains at these international exhibitions. Considering the representation of Colombia on the international stage as well as in the travel literature of

¹² For an extended discussion on the social and historical sources of indigenism in Mexican art, see Daniel Schavelson, ed., *La polémica del arte nacional en Mexico, 1850-1910* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económico, 1988).

¹³ For more information on Francisco Laso and indigenism, see Natalia Majluf, *The Creation of the Image of the Indian in 19th-Century Peru: The Paintings of Francisco Laso (1823-1869)* (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 1995); and Natalia Majluf, "'Ce n'est pas le Pérou,' or, the Failure of Authenticity: Marginal Cosmopolitans at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855," *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1997): 868-893.

¹⁴ The founders and principles of this movement are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, under the section "The Emergence of Alternative Art Establishments."

the period, one visitor in 1856 expressed his discontent in how misinformed Europeans were of these territories. Speaking about all of Latin America, A. Monti noted:

Europe barely knows that a Spanish America exists... but, it is not the Europeans, but instead the Americans themselves who are to blame for the darkness and insignificance of South America. If we do not present our production before an exhibition to which residents from the most remote nations of the continent come to see and admire; if we do not inscribe the name of our Republic in the nomenclature of civilized communities in the world; if, missing this rare and favorable occasion, we do not denounce the suggested apprehensions of ill intentioned travelers, ignorant, or those passionate for the fantastic and novelists, we sanction, for them only, the severe and unjust judgment which Europe has bestowed over the communities who founded their independence over the ruins of Spanish colonial domination.¹⁵

It is not clear why the works of the professors and students at the Academia Gutiérrez and the Escuela de Bellas Artes were not exhibited internationally once these institutions had been established in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. This is particularly puzzling when one considers that other Latin American countries were doing so. Surely the intention on Colombia's part was not to encourage the widespread European and Euro-American ignorance of its abilities and accomplishments; rather, it is a reflection of the country's inattentiveness and inexperience. Preoccupied with more urgent issues at home, and perhaps simply unaware of how to represent the country externally, Colombia faltered in creating both an accurate and forceful international presence.

Because a number of other Latin American artists outside Colombia incorporated the pre-Columbian aesthetics and subjects from their own country into their works, it is

¹⁵ "La Europa apenas sabe que existe una América Española.... Pero, no son los europeos, sino los americanos mismos sobre quiénes ha de recaer el mal i la culpa de la oscuridad e insignificancia de la América del Sur. Si no presentamos nuestras producciones ante una Exposición que vienen a ver i a admirar los habitantes de las mas remotas naciones del continente; si no hacemos inscribir el nombre de nuestras Repúblicas en la nomenclatura de los pueblos civilizados de la tierra; si, perdiendo esta favorable i rara ocasión, no desvanecemos las aprensiones sujeridas por viajeros mal intencionados, ignorantes o apasionados de lo fantástico i novelero, sancionamos, por ello solo, el juicio severo i hasta injusto que la Europa se ha formado de los pueblos que fundaron su independencia sobre las ruinas de la dominación colonial de la España." A. Monti, "La América española en la Exposición Universal," *El Catolicismo* (April 8, 1856): 72.

curious that Colombian artists did not also do this. Colombian artists distanced themselves from their “indigenist” roots, while at the same time proclaimed their “creole” ancestry, however unconsciously. Scholars from various disciplines, and in following with the postcolonial writings of Homi K. Bhabha, particularly *The Location of Culture* (1994), have argued that a reference to indigenism, *mestizaje*, or hybridity can be understood as a form of cultural resistance against European hegemony.¹⁶ If we were to apply this same model to nineteenth-century Colombian artists, then these painters who so adamantly emulated everything European (in terms of painting subjects and styles), not only demonstrated the high and irrefutable esteem they held for European culture, but their unwillingness, or perhaps inability, to challenge it.

Latin America’s pre-Columbian past and the choices made by each country to emphasize it at world’s fairs affected not only the work of each country’s artists and each delegations’s choices in exhibition content, but also, in some cases, the architectural aesthetics of pavilions. At the Exposition Universelle of 1889, for example, Mexico’s national pavilion replicated an Aztec temple, whereas their pavilion for the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris was a classical Greek-style palace reflecting Western architectural aesthetics (Figs. 65 and 66). The earlier pre-Columbian edifice was purposely designed to stand out, and according to historian Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, would have “appealed to the ethnographic, archaeological, and anthropological concerns of Europeans, but as an artistic depiction it aimed to be approved within the European

¹⁶ For an extended discussion on cultural hybridity from the perspective of an anthropologist, see Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For a discussion on how indigenism relates to modernism in Latin American art, see the “Universal and Vernacular” section of *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, eds. Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), in which various authors discuss how Latin American artists utilized the “universal” language of the European avant-garde to create a more personalized one, with “vernacular” references and as a form of resistance towards the European example.

decline of classicism.”¹⁷ Even when one of the pavilions referenced the pre-Columbian past, it was done so from the point of view of a European and as a reflection of a scientific and not necessarily artistic interest.¹⁸

In addition to attempting to garner attention for itself in its appeals to the “ethnographic, archaeological, and anthropological concerns of Europeans,” these pavilions were, above all, a form of entertainment. The pavilions of Bolivia and Venezuela were, like that of Mexico, designed to draw crowds, though in the South American examples the architecture did not borrow from indigenous aesthetics (Figs. 67 and 68). Still, they were eclectic, decorative, highly ornate, and eye-catching structures. Not all of the national houses of the Latin American countries, however, utilized fancy architecture at these fairs. The pavilions of Costa Rica and Nicaragua at the Exposition Universelle of 1889, for example, were less grandiose and flashy and followed a more conservative architectural aesthetic. The diversity of architectural styles seen in these Latin American pavilions demonstrate how countries did not always accurately represent their national heritage, as well as how they often did so at the expense of eliminating all traces of their pre-Columbian past.

When competing with other celebrated exhibition attractions, such as the Eiffel Tower, these pavilions had to be visually attractive. Many of these Latin American pavilions were designed by French architects, further proof of how these national houses functioned as a form of spectacle for a European audience, instead of as a reflection of a

¹⁷ Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 101.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

shared national identity.¹⁹ The exteriors of these Latin American buildings tend to be eclectic and distinctive in order to alert the fairgoer to the unique collections of pre-Hispanic and colonial artifacts and mineral, agricultural, and ethnographic specimens on display inside. One French visitor described the interior of Bolivia's national house as:

filled with antiquities of the Incas, a curious collection of filigree objects... feathers and an astonishing variety of minerals; even the exit, which takes place through a narrow corridor, is pompously decorated with the name of the tunnel and constructed out of coins.²⁰

From this visitor's account the interior seems to have contained a random and overwhelming collection of objects, a type of cabinet of curiosities, demonstrating how both the interiors and exteriors of these Latin American pavilions were, like the universal expositions themselves, a form of distraction.

This sense of sensationalism proved to be particularly important at the Exposition Universelle of 1889, where issues of cultural primitivism and imperialism were especially pronounced. Although exhibitions from as early as 1851 had included colonial artifacts, photographs, costumes, tools, and other ethnographic instruments, never had they featured colonial villages, with native participants and recreated local environments, like they did at the Exposition Universelle of 1889. Europe's imperial desires were showcased in these exhibits, at a time when Britain and France were establishing colonies in Africa

¹⁹ At the Exposition Universelle of 1889, the following Latin American pavilions were designed by French architects: the Pavilion of Venezuela by Edmond Jean Baptiste Paulin, the Pavilion of Brazil by Louis Dauvergne, the Pavilion of Bolivia by Paul Fouquiau, the Pavilion of Argentina by Albert Ballu, with the exception of the Pavilion of Mexico, designed by Mexican artist Antonio Peñafiel.

²⁰ "contenant des antiquités des Incas, une curieuse collection d'objets filigranes...des plumes et une étonnante variété de minerais; même la sortie s'opère par un étroit couloir, décoré pompeusement du nom de tunnel et construit en minerai d'argent." G.I., "Exposition Universelle," *Le Monde Illustré* (August 3, 1889): 92.

and Asia.²¹ According to Robert Rydell, the scientific and anthropological approach of these colonial exhibits helped to legitimize cultural prejudices rather than counter them, which in the case of the United States, “endowed popular racial attitudes with apparent scientific credibility.”²² These exhibits, then, paralleled the ways that Colombia and other Latin American countries chose to represent themselves when they displayed, sometimes exclusively, their natural resources and archeological artifacts as emblems of their heritage.

The hierarchical relationships established between colonizers and colonized, civilized and uncivilized, were detrimental not only for the French colonies of Indochina and Algeria, but also for the marginalized and emerging countries of Latin America. This sense of French superiority can best be appreciated in a caricature by *Le Journal Amusant* (Fig. 69), in which a Western man is pulled on a rickshaw by an African, with the caption reading: “A member of the Society protective of animals.”²³ The irony, and humor of this caricature is that although the man is protective of animal rights, he is not--evidently--of human ones. Although this is a caricature and its message should not be taken at face value, it is nevertheless reflective of the imperialist attitudes that these colonial exhibits promoted. What is particularly important for the purposes of this investigation is how these cultural inaccuracies impacted the art criticism of Latin American artists. How did primitive representations of natives in villages affect the critical reception of Latin American artists at these universal expositions, especially when works of Mexican fine

²¹ See Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: A History of the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), for an extended discussion on how these international exhibitions served to reinforce the imperialist ideologies of both the host and visiting countries.

²² Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Vision of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 6.

²³ “Un membre de la Société protectrice des animaux.” Cover of *Le Journal Amusant* (July 20, 1889).

art, many of them dealing with Aztec subjects, were exhibited inside a reconstructed Aztec temple alongside an Aztec colonial exhibit?

Latin American artists were perceived as different and inferior only when they drew attention to their national identity. At the Salons for example, their names and nationalities were listed in the catalogue; however, it was their exhibited work that alerted the general European viewer to the artist's identity. In fact, when Latin American artists exhibited Salon-type paintings, meaning canvases based on European genre scenes or historical subjects, or themes from classical antiquity, the critics tended not to mention the artist's culture or nationality in relation to the exhibited work. However, when the artist represented a distinctly local genre scene, or when a painter addressed a theme of the Spanish Conquest or pre-Hispanic culture, the critics were immediately alerted to the artist's identity, thus changing the context of reception entirely. Once aware of the artist's nationality, not only was the work perceived differently, but the meaning of the painting itself changed completely.

This misreading of a Latin American painting occurred at the 1855 Exposition Universelle when the critics not only caricatured the painting of Laso, *Inhabitant of the Cordillera of Peru* (1855), but changed its title to *Indian Potter* (Figs. 70 and 71). With this latter adjustment, the critics also altered the significance of the canvas itself. Peruvian scholar Natalia Majluf comments that “all intended meaning [of Laso's painting] was eradicated, all reference to history obliterated...and the painting was denied the right to signify beyond the level of the picturesque.”²⁴ In this painting and in others by Laso, Majluf has demonstrated how critics, in rejecting the European aesthetics of these paintings and in focusing on the subject matter at hand, transformed the regionalism of

²⁴ Majluf, “Ce n'est pas le Pérou,” 882.

the painting into a picturesque caricature. The painting's transformation was an inevitable consequence of its undeniably Latin American subject matter; even if the critics were unaware of Laso's nationality, the painting made this self-evident.

This picturesque transformation also occurred in the work of Mexican artist José María Jara, who at the 1889 Exposition Universelle exhibited *The Wake* (1889, Fig. 72). The canvas, which represented a quaint and rural burial scene, was renamed by critics *Burial of an Indigene*, a title that eliminated the dignity of this funerary ritual, and instead, suggested the "insignificance" and apparent banality of burying a native.²⁵ Whereas in Laso's *Inhabitant of the Cordillera of Peru* the man was shown wearing distinctly Peruvian clothes and carrying a pre-Columbian ceramic vessel, in *The Wake* there is no clear reference to Mexico or to a distinctly local burial tradition. Although certain details like the folk-style clothes of the figures and the colonial altar in the background might suggest Mexico, what surely contributed most to this change in reading was the exhibition venue in which the painting was displayed--Mexico's national pavilion. The Aztec temple pavilion together with the paintings exhibited inside, such as the Aztec story of the *Founding of Tenochtitlan* (1879) by Leandro Izaguirre, further contributed to the picturesque perception that critics had of *The Wake*. The renaming of these canvases, a result of their misreading, demonstrates how French critics were unable to view Latin American countries as anything other than primitive.

Unlike contemporary works coming out of Peru and Mexico, Colombia rarely displayed examples of fine art of the period. In the rare instances when it did, however, it was typically received with scorn such as in 1887 when Angel Cuervo showed the work

²⁵ The translation of this title, *Burial of a Indigene*, is provided by Dawn Ades in "Academies and History Painting," in *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 36.

of Colonial painter Gregorio Vázquez de Arce y Ceballos to an expert at the Louvre Museum, who concluded that it “was not worth anything.”²⁶ This encounter, which was not at an international exhibition, but in a private showing, demonstrates the unwillingness, or perhaps incapacity, of French critics to attribute artistic worth to the work of Colombian artists. It is also poignant that Cuervo chose to showcase the work of a seventeenth-century colonial painter when he could have chosen any number of contemporary Colombian works or even the works of early nineteenth-century artists such as José María Espinosa? Cuervo’s decision reflects his inexperience, but more importantly, a sense of insecurity and lack of confidence in the work of existing painters; something that was not found in the work of Vázquez de Arce y Ceballos, an established painter and one of the leading artists of the colonial era.

Despite the reaction to Vázquez de Arce’s work by the Louvre expert, Colombia continued to exhibit vegetables, minerals, stones, cocoa, coffee beans, silver, mercury, and a collection of pre-Hispanic gold at the expositions.²⁷ A visitor to the Exposition Universelle of 1889, who focused primarily on Colombia’s display of minerals and archaeological artifacts, gives little mention to any fine art examples. This type of display was detrimental to Colombia’s, as well as other Latin Americans’ image, as it encouraged European stereotypes. According to I. Fonnegra, a visitor to another fair—the Exposition Universelle of 1878:

Latin America stood out among all for its natural riches...[while] England and France, Germany and Belgium called attention to their industry, sciences, writings and fine art. . . . The United States of America is admired for their prodigious industrial development.²⁸

²⁶ “ne vaut rien.” Angel Cuervo, *Conversación artística* (Paris: Imprenta reunidas, 1887), 118.

²⁷ J.J. Triana, *La Colombie à l’Exposition Universelle de 1889* (Paris: Lahure, 1889), 4-5.

²⁸ “la América latina descuella entre todos por sus riquezas naturales...Inglaterra y Francia, Alemania y Bélgica llaman la atención por su industria y sus ciencias, sus letras y bellas artes...los Estados

In the context of an exhibition that promoted industrial and mechanical progress, Latin American countries, including Colombia, were viewed under the restrictive, as well as derogatory, category of “natural riches.”

At the Exposition Universelle of 1889, Colombia’s presence was further weakened by its inclusion in Uruguay’s pavilion and by the out-of-the-way placement of this and other Latin American pavilions at the exhibition (Fig. 12). One fairgoer noted the insignificant presence of these Latin American pavilions in comparison to other attractions; however, he also added that they were worth the detour.²⁹ Since Colombia did not have a pavilion of its own at the 1889 exhibition, it did not appear on the exhibition plan, similar to what had happened earlier at the Exposition Universelle of 1878. This meant that visitors would have been unaware of Colombia’s participation. This lack of a physical presence, both in the form of a national pavilion of its own, as well as on exhibition plans, seriously minimized Colombia’s international image.³⁰

Although Colombia could have redeemed its reputation at the Exposition Universelle of 1900, which attracted more than 50 million visitors--20 million more than had attended the 1889 exhibition--the Thousand Days War prevented its participation. The war, which began in October of 1899, combined with an economic recession brought about by falling coffee prices, led to Colombia’s complete exclusion from the exhibition. Fortunately, Colombia had participated earlier in the World's Columbian Exhibition of

Unidos de América admiran por su prodigioso desarrollo industrial.” I. Fonnegra, “Exposición Universal,” *Los Andes*, no. 2 (June 23, 1878): 13.

²⁹ G.I., 92.

³⁰ An example of how Colombia’s presence at the Exposition Universelle of 1889 failed to attract the attention of the press can be seen in how the French serial publication, *Le Monde Illustré*, from July 20, 1889 to October 26, 1889, did not mention Colombia, despite their presence inside the Pavilion of Uruguay. Since this publication discussed the presence of other Latin American countries, such as Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, and San Salvador, it is surprising that Colombia was not factored into the discussion. Unfortunately the readers of this publication, as well as the visitors of the exhibition, were not aware of Colombia’s presence.

1893 in Chicago, and not only did they actively contribute to this exhibition, but they also exhibited in their own pavilion (Fig. 73). Colombia's pavilion design followed an Italian Renaissance style and was in accordance with the Beaux-Arts aesthetics of the fair organizers, thereby avoiding any artistic reference to its pre-Hispanic past. In fact, if it were not for Colombia's national flag and emblem, the condor, this two-story edifice would have been indistinguishable from European pavilions.

As detailed in *The Book of the Fair*, Colombia exhibited its typical display of pre-Hispanic objects, which included:

...the graves of Indians, some of them representative of prehistoric times, some specimens of idols and images, pottery, wood-carvings, water bottles, helmets, trumpets, breastplates, necklaces, and bangles and anklets of gold. In wax statuettes are shown the features and physique of the natives, attired in garments fashioned by themselves, and there is at least one article which is proof of native skill in the line of fancy needlework.³¹

In addition, Colombia also displayed the usual coffee, cotton, and mineral resources. The lack of mention of Colombia's contemporary art production suggests that either Colombia did not exhibit any examples, or the author simply did not comment on them. Since the works of fine art in the pavilions of Venezuela, Mexico, and Brazil pavilion were discussed in *The Book of the Fair*, one can assume that Colombia, as it had done in the previous international exhibitions, did not represent the work of its contemporary, or for that matter, recently deceased artists.

³¹ *The Book of the Fair* (Chicago: The Bancroft Company, 1893), 15.

The Difficulties of Exhibiting in Bogotá

While there existed few opportunities for contemporary artists to exhibit internationally, in Colombia, artists were encouraged to display their works and their exhibition choices largely determined the future of their artistic careers. As in Paris, they were limited to certain exhibition venues, not because of competition, but because of availability. In addition to the exhibitions of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, which were the most prominent, there also existed smaller and more informal venues, typically located outside the capital city, such as the Club Brelán in Medellín. Despite these limitations, as well as the conservative tastes of the critics, Colombia provided for its own artists a more welcoming and supportive exhibition environment than Paris.

The earliest art exhibitions in Bogotá date to the late 1870s and early 80's, before the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1886. At one of these exhibitions, organized by the Academia Gutiérrez, the works of Garay and Pantaleón Mendoza were received with such positive acclaim that they were chosen as the most favored successors to the Directorship of the Academia Gutiérrez, following Santiago Gutiérrez's departure from Colombia. This recognition launched the careers of Garay and Mendoza and helped facilitate their acceptance and positive receptions at future art exhibitions. One year later in 1882, at another art exhibition, Garay won a scholarship to travel abroad. In this regard, these exhibitions were particularly important for established artists interested in studying abroad, as well as for those yearning for recognition.

The opening exhibition in 1886 of the Escuela de Bellas Artes featured over 1,200 works organized in a variety of categories that included figurative painting, genre scenes, landscapes, seascapes, still life paintings, portraiture, sculpture, architecture, and the

decorative arts.³² After 1886, fine art exhibitions continued with more regularity, and their importance increased, as noted by the active presence of both artists and critics at these events. Two extremely influential shows, one in 1899 and the other in 1904, for example, followed the 1886 exhibition. One of the highlights of the 1899 show was a work by Garay featuring a controversial nude, *Woman of the Levite from the Efraim Mountains*. This work represents what Colombian art historian Alvaro Medina has identified as the earliest and most heated political debate between the liberal and conservative press.³³

Another exhibition in 1899 at the Club Brelán in Medellín attracted the participation of other Colombian artists, most of them from the region of Antioquia, as well as former pupils of Cano. Despite the outbreak of the Thousand Days War, as well as the unusually high price of admissions tickets, the show was sold out. The proceeds raised for this exhibition allowed Cano, whose government support had terminated, to travel throughout Europe. This exhibition in Medellín, and not Colombia's art capital of Bogotá, demonstrates the general influence fine art exhibitions had at this time in fostering and developing a sense of appreciation for the arts. This exhibition also serves as an example of how regional exhibitions, not just in Medellín, were a viable alternative for artists working outside Bogotá.

The exhibition of 1904 in Bogotá was perhaps the most influential among the three because it reflected a considerable stylistic shift in painting, as well as a transformation in the public's tolerance for avant-garde trends. Although Santa María had

³² Carlos Miguel Pizarro, *Exposición nacional de bellas artes de 1899* (Bogotá: B.B. Delar, 1899), 5-6.

³³ Alvaro Medina, *Procesos del arte en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1978), 30.

exhibited at the exhibition of 1899, along with Garay, Acevedo Bernal, and Cano, it was at the exhibition of 1904 that critics not only recognized his work but highlighted it in a positive light. After the exhibition of 1910, the Impressionist brushwork of Acevedo Bernal, Santa María, and Zerda, as well as the decorative painting of Valenzuela had replaced Garay's and Urdaneta's Academic style of painting. The exhibitions that followed, continued to pave the way towards modernism and encourage the development of other exhibition venues, culminating in 1940 with the founding of the Salón Nacional de Artistas, the first establishment dedicated solely to the display and criticism of art that is still in existence today.³⁴

Between Two Worlds:

Garay in Paris at the Salon of 1886, and in Bogotá at the Exhibition of 1886

In order to better understand the exhibition practices of Colombian artists both in Paris and Bogotá, and to assess public reception of the artists' works at each place, I have chosen to focus on specific artists, paintings, and exhibitions as representative examples of the broader picture. Garay, for example, exhibited nude studies in both Paris and Bogotá allowing a comparative assessment of these works by this artist. Garay's nude study in Paris was shown at the Académie Julian.³⁵ Based on the emphasis of figurative

³⁴ Juan Ricardo Rey-Márquez, in "Las exposiciones artísticas e industriales y las exposiciones nacionales como antecedentes del Salón Nacional de Artistas," *Ensayos: Historia y teoría del arte*, no. 11 (2006): 67-87, has argued how the national exhibitions that occurred from as early as 1886, both in industry and the fine arts, were particularly influential in the establishment of the Salón Nacional de Artistas in 1940.

³⁵ Francisco A. Cano, "Epifanio Garay," *Lectura y Arte*, no. 4/5 (December 1903): 64.

study at the Académie Julian and on Cano's perception of Garay as a "profound connoisseur of the human body," it seems reasonable that Garay executed, and exhibited, more nude studies in Paris though documentary evidence of this is lacking.³⁶ In Bogotá, however, there is no evidence that Garay exhibited more than a single painting of a female nude, *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* (1899).

This difference in the number of painted and exhibited nude paintings between Paris and Bogotá demonstrates the extent to which Garay was conscious of public tastes as well as exhibition environments. Moreover, the fact that *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* was represented in the guise of a biblical subject demonstrates his careful handling of nudity, which he knew would have been, and in fact was, a controversial issue for Colombians. The polemic that ensued from displaying nudes in Colombia ultimately affected Garay to the point of concluding his experimentation with the subject altogether. Although this painting is discussed later in the chapter with relation to the 1899 exhibition, it serves here as proof of how these artists carefully chose what to exhibit, never losing sight of their intended public.

Garay's canvas *Recreation* (Fig. 74) was painted much earlier than *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains*, when the artist resided in France. It was exhibited in both cities in 1886. In Paris the exhibition venue was the Salon des Artistes Français whereas in Bogotá it was included in the opening exhibition of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. Like most Latin American artists, Garay exhibited this painting after having enrolled at the Académie Julian and studied under William-Adolphe Bouguereau and Tony Robert-Fleury.³⁷ Although this painting was accepted into the Salon, an honor for

³⁶ "conocedor profundo del cuerpo humano." Ibid., 69.

any international artist, the painting was not illustrated nor mentioned in any of the mainstream French periodicals that discussed the Salon, such as *Le Charivari*, *L'Illustration* or *Le Journal Amusant*. This lack of mention, which rarely occurred in the case of French artists, demonstrates the competitive nature of the Parisian art world.

Le Charivari was one of the most humorous and popular of art journals in Paris at the time. Among its most popular regular features was the “Salon Charivarique,” which was published every May and typically featured fifty highlights from the more than 2,000 exhibited works at the Salon. In addition to commenting on and illustrating the paintings, the authors of *Le Charivari* also provided caricatures of them, injecting humorous captions and witty interpretations of major Salon paintings. Henri Gervex, Santa María’s mentor and established Salon exhibitor, was usually featured in such caricatures not only in *Le Charivari* but in other popular journals as well. *Le Journal Amusant* featured his *Meeting of the Jury* in a caricature on May 2, 1887 (Figs. 39 and 75), with the caption: “The members of the jury of painting, indignant by the view of the woman in a state of utter nudity, attack the canvas with the top of their canes and umbrellas.”³⁸ In poking fun at the conservative tastes of the Salon jury of the Société des Artistes Français, the critics of *Le Journal Amusant* also referred to a point of contention among contemporary French artists, who had been aggressively battling the traditionalism of the Salon jury. This caricature, like that of the man on rickshaw described earlier and featured in this same journal on July 20, 1889, demonstrates the old adage that says behind every joke is a grain of truth.

³⁷ P. Sánchez, *Les catalogues des Salons XIV (1884-1886)* (Dijon: L’Echelle de Jacob, 2007), 82.

³⁸ “Les membres du jury de peinture indignés par la vue d’une femme dans un état complet de nudité, lacerent la toile a coupe de canne et de parapluie.” *Le Journal Amusant* (May 2, 1885): 7.

The traditional subject matter of Garay's canvas may account for why *Recreation* was overlooked by the French press. In terms of subject matter, this representation of a mother carrying a baby in her lap and amusing her infant by smiling and dangling keys was not a risky painting by any means. In fact, this type of a canvas, which evoked the comfort and sentimentality of a maternal scene, would have gone unnoticed by the French critics, because it did not shock the audience or stand out among the more than 2,000 paintings, many of which were more explicit in subject matter. Additionally, Garay's minority status and anonymity, especially in comparison to such well-known French painters as Bouguereau and Fleury whose works were also included in this Salon, would have contributed further to his lack of mention in Paris. The painting and the fact that it was accepted into the Salon of 1886, however, was celebrated by the Colombian press, particularly after it came to Bogotá later that year.

In stark contrast to its reception by the Parisian media, Garay's *Recreation* was not only widely discussed in the Colombian press, but it was illustrated in numerous Colombian publications. It was first featured in Urdaneta's *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* on September 20, 1886, and again in 1903 in Cano's *Lectura y Arte*. Both of these journals stressed the painting's acceptance into the Salon des Artistes Français as the sole measure of Garay's international success, paying little attention to its lack of mention in the French press. Colombian critics also admired the tenderness and purity of the maternal scene, which they considered to be untainted by nudity or impropriety. One critic explained, "The robe half-opened, the corset and the upper part of the blouse are not at all provocative, on the contrary, the figure breathes modesty, a natural result of the honesty

of her joy and the purity of her heart.”³⁹ Purity, morality, and tenderness—all of the characteristics that contributed to Garay’s canvas being overlooked by the French press—in Colombia, were celebrated.

This difference in taste and cultural values, then, is what made Garay such a successful painter in Colombia, especially within the conservative circles of the *Regeneración*, while making him all but anonymous in France. For many nineteenth-century Colombian artists who traveled to Paris, with the exception of Santa María, public success was found in either one or the other country, but rarely in both. This difference in reception also reflected the cultural dilemma with which Colombian artists faced: how to uphold the standards of their own society, while confronting an entirely different set of expectations in Paris. Garay’s shrewd choices of works to exhibit demonstrate his grasp of the styles and subject matter that would gain him entry into the Salon, and that would interest his clientele back home. It was a fine line to walk and only rarely did he deviate from this path.

In Paris:

Santa María and Naturalism

The Salon des Artistes Français of 1887 was an important exhibition for Latin American artists both because of their increased presence and attention they received from the French press, especially in comparison to previous years. Although Argentinean

³⁹ “La bata entreabierto, el corsé y la parte superior de la camisa no tienen nada de provocativo, al contrario, la figura respira pudor, consecuencia natural del candor, de la alegría y de la pureza de corazón.” “El Cuadro de D. Epifanio Garay,” *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* 5, no. 100 (September 20, 1886): 64.

artist Eduardo Sívori and Venezuelan Arturo Michelena, both students at the Académie Julian, exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français of 1886 alongside Garay, their work was not noticed by the French press until the following year. Argentinean artist Eduardo Sívori exhibited a nude painting entitled *The Maid Awakening*, Venezuelan Arturo Michelena exhibited two genre scenes, *The Sick Boy* and *An Electoral Visit*, while Santa María exhibited his first Salon painting, *Seine Laundresses* (1887). Michelena's success at the Salon des Artistes Français of 1887 was confirmed by the second prize medal he received in the Section of Painting that his biographer, Javier Francisco Duplá, described as a major achievement considering that the artist was "a Venezuelan painter, coming from a distant country, totally unknown to the French, recently arrived, [and] a young adult of hardly 24 years of age."⁴⁰ Michelena's canvas, *An Electoral Visit* (Fig. 76), was also reproduced among the 100 illustrations--most by Europeans--featured in the catalogue of that exhibition.⁴¹

Michelena's *The Sick Boy* (Fig. 77) also attracted the attention of French critics, particularly those from *L'Art Français* and *Le Charivari* (Fig. 78). Within the "Salon Charivarique" section of the May 12, 1887 issue of the latter publication, Michelena's *The Sick Boy* was caricatured with the following caption "Not astonishing that the child is sick; his mother is sitting on top of him."⁴² The light-hearted humor of this caricature alludes to the cause of the boy's sickness, which is not a complicated illness, but rather his mother, who sits on top of him. Sívori's *The Maid Awakening* was also illustrated in this same section of the "Salon Charivarique," under the heading "The bed is made of

⁴⁰ "un pintor venezolano, procedente de un país lejano, totalmente desconocido para los franceses, un recién llegado, un joven de apenas 24 años." Javier Francisco Duplá, *Arturo Michelena, 1863-1898* (Caracas: Editora El Nacional, 2007), 26.

⁴¹ Gustave Ollendorff, *Salon de 1887* (Paris: L. Baschet, 1887), n.p.

⁴² "Pas étonnant que l'enfant soit malade; sa mère s'assied dessus." Bramer, "Salon Charivarique," *Le Charivari* (May 12, 1887).

iron, but not the rest!” (Figs. 79 and 80).⁴³ The illustration and caption focuses on the woman’s nudity, contrasting the soft curvatures of her body with the cold and metallic surfaces of the iron bed.

Although *The Maid Awakening* was a success in Paris, in Buenos Aires, it was a failure, demonstrating how an accomplishment in one city could mean the opposite in another, similar to the case of Garay mentioned earlier. This canvas was so controversial and negatively received because of the woman’s de-historicized and un-mythologized nudity that, according to Argentinean scholar Laura Malosetti Costa, it came to define Sívori as a “scandalous” artist, in the tradition of Edouard Manet and Gustave Courbet.⁴⁴ Female nudity was clearly unacceptable in Buenos Aires, as it was in Colombia, although Sívori’s manner of representation in this work was even more controversial. The French critics, in contrast, already accustomed to such works as Manet’s *Olympia* (1863) and Courbet’s *Woman with a Parrot* (1866), did not draw particular attention to the painting.

Although Santa María’s *Seine Laundresses* (Fig. 36) was not caricatured by *Le Charivari* or *Le Journal Amusant*, it was illustrated in *L’Illustration* and *L’Art Français*. In *L’Art Français*, Santa María’s canvas was reproduced alongside Michelena’s *The Sick Boy*, but it was done so almost a year after the opening of the 1887 Salon--on March 17, 1888--when the painting was no longer relevant. *L’Illustration* illustrated Santa María’s canvas on April 30, 1887 and mentioned it in a positive light. It was also discussed in the same sentence with the work of other celebrated French painters, such as Gustave Boulanger (1824-1888). Santa María’s success at the Salon des Artistes Français of 1887

⁴³ “Le lit est en fer, mais pas le reste!” Bramer, “Salon Charivarique,” *Le Charivari* (May 12, 1887).

⁴⁴ Laura Malosetti Costa, *Los primeros modernos: arte y sociedad en Buenos Aires a fines del siglo XIX* (Mexico: El Fondo de Cultura Económica de México, 2001), 209.

was followed years later by another major achievement at the Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts of 1903, where the artist exhibited *The Dragons of the English Guard*, a painting that was reproduced in *Lectura y Arte* (no. 8/9). Santa María's *The Dragons of the English Guard* even received unsolicited praise in a personal letter from Jean Beraud, the Vice President of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in France, who commented that this painting was “ ‘the most important work admitted this year by the jury. It is very flattering for you and your country, Colombia, that you exhibited so well among the French artists.’ ”⁴⁵ As this letter can attest, Santa María, in contrast to his contemporaries, attained the highest recognition in France and at the Salons.

Santa María continued to exhibit his work in Paris until the late 1920s. He showed his work at over ten Salons of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, and in 1920, he became a member of this organization, for which his mentor, Henri Gervex, was one of the founding members. Santa María's extensive exhibition career, which he maintained even when he lived in Bogotá, was aided by these French connections that he had cultivated as a student at the École. His financial stability, as well as his independence from government sponsorship, helped to ensure his success internationally. Santa María even exhibited in other European venues including the Salon de la Société Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels.

Santa María's early success at the Salon des Artistes Français of 1887 indicates the steps that foreign artists needed to follow in order to be accepted by the Salon jury, as well as to be recognized by the French critics. First, the size of *Seine Laundresses*, 7.6 x 11 ft, was the appropriate size for a Salon painting, which usually measured at least 6

⁴⁵ “ ‘l'œuvre la plus importante admit cette année par le jury. C'est très flatteur pour vous et pour votre pays, la Colombie que vous a présenté, si bien parmi les artistes français.’ ” This letter is transcribed in *Andrés de Santa María: nuevos testimonios, nueva visión* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1989), 45; and it is located in the Private Collection of Baron Gaiffier d'Hestroy in Belgium.

feet. This large size would have allowed the painting to remain visible, if hung high. The subject matter, which Santa María's biographer Eduardo Serrano has attributed to French Realism, also relates to Impressionism, since artists such as Edgar Degas and Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894) were also recording Parisian scenes of labor, as in Caillebotte's *The Floor Scrapers* (1875).⁴⁶ The harmonious reconciliation of these two traditions, the Realist and the Impressionist, made *Seine Laundresses* a successful painting among the larger artistic community.

Within the circle of jurors of the Salon des Artistes Français, Santa María's *Seine Laundresses* represented a viable alternative to the radical Pointillist style of Georges Seurat (1859-1891), who just one year earlier had exhibited *A Sunday at La Grande Jatte* (1884-6) at the last Impressionist exhibition. Among the earlier Impressionist exhibitors, like Monet, who did not paint with meticulously applied dots of color (Pointillism), Santa María's canvas was perhaps seen as merely acceptable; because it still maintained certain modernist traits, like a painterly aesthetics and lack of modeling. While *Seine Laundresses* reveals the influence of Santa María's mentor, Gervex, this type of stylistic compromise also reflects the aesthetics of *juste milieu* (meaning "happy medium") painters or Naturalists. According to art historian Gabriel Weisberg this was the most successful and popular alternative to Impressionism at the time.⁴⁷

Santa María was not the only artist to emulate this style of French painting, known for its de-politicized and painterly representations of labor as it quickly became a

⁴⁶ Eduardo Serrano, *Andrés de Santa María: pintor colombiano de resonancia universal* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1988), 22-23.

⁴⁷ Gabriel Weisberg, in *Beyond Impressionism: The Naturalist Impulse* (New York: Abrams, 1992), discusses the internationalism of this movement, as well as how among the Naturalist painters there were also Impressionists, like Gustave Caillebotte and Edgar Degas. Santa María's *Seine Laundresses* can therefore be understood as a reflection of this Naturalist impulse, although certain compositional and stylistic choices reflect the influence of Gervex and Impressionism, respectively.

common style among Latin American artists. Through the two genre scenes, *The Sick Boy* and *An Electoral Visit*, Michelena, for example, also replicated the aesthetics of Naturalism, which in turn, helped to secure his admittance into the Salon. Diverging from the brutality and unflattering representations of French Realism—as exemplified in the work of Courbet, Michelena instead represented a charming depiction of rural folk life. Argentinean painter Sívori also painted in the Naturalist vein, as indicated by his submissions to the Salon des Artistes Français of 1888, which included *The Death of a Peasant* (1888) and *Without a Family* (1888). According to Malosetti Costa, Sívori's decision to work with Jean Paul Laurens, a professor at the Académie Julian, is also a reflection of this Naturalist impulse.⁴⁸

The adoption of this Naturalist vocabulary, however, came at the expense of forging any attempt of incorporating locality that would identify these painters as Latin Americans. In Michelena's *The Sick Boy* and *An Electoral Visit*, for instance, the interiors, clothing, and characters reflect French culture more so than they do Venezuelan daily life. In Santa María's *Seine Laundresses*, there is not even the faintest suggestion of Colombian life. Instead, Santa María has represented a truly Parisian scene of labor, set against the backdrop of the recognizable Seine River. Determined to gain acceptance into the Parisian art world, at whatever expense and perhaps with little understanding of how these decisions would affect their career and their country, these artists made a decision to suppress their cultural ethnicity and diversity, in favor of homogeneity and invisibility.

As a result of this lack of a cultural reference, none of the critics mentioned the nationality of these artists, nor did they misread the intended meanings of their paintings. In this regard, Michelena and Santa María, in contrast to Laso and Jara, demonstrate how

⁴⁸ Laura Malosetti Costa, *El más viejo de los jóvenes: Eduardo Sívori en la construcción de una modernidad crítica* (Buenos Aires: FIAAR, 1999), 53-54.

an omission of one's pre-Hispanic and colonial past, as well as a deliberate reference to French painting, resulted in the French critics to discuss their paintings using the same standards that they would for a French artist, without the complications of ethnicity. These paintings also had an influence on Latin American art, since, according to Marta Traba, this "type of social painting acceptable in the Paris salons, [and] typified by the gentle humility of the peasants in Millet's *Angelus*... served in France to illustrate serialized novels such as Hugo's *Les Misérables*," while in Latin America, as well as in Colombia it was understood as a form of nationalism, similar to landscape painting.⁴⁹ Indeed, Santa María's *The Gleaners* (1895, Fig. 41) and Cano's *Horizons* (1913) are examples of how French Realism and Naturalism, respectively, were translated, often quite literally, into Colombian painting.⁵⁰

In Paris:

Moreno and the Orientalist Aesthetics

Colombian artist Salvador Moreno also commonly chose to exhibit Salon-style paintings, but his canvas, *Carmencita, The Woman from Seville* (Fig. 81), reflected the fascination he and Europeans in general had for Orientalist subjects. Although Orientalist scenes of the Middle East and North Africa were prevalent at the Salons and universal expositions of the late nineteenth century, scenes of Spanish life were also considered

⁴⁹ Marta Traba, "Introduction," in *Art of Latin America, 1900-1980* (Washington D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, 1994), 5.

⁵⁰ In the case of Cano's *Horizons*, Juan Camilo Escobar Villegas, in *Francisco Antonio Cano 1865-1935* (Medellín: Museo de Antioquia, 2003), 75-78, has connected the regionalism of this painting to specific agrarian reforms taking place in the Department of Antioquia.

exotic, albeit to a lesser extent. Edouard Manet was a great admirer of this Spanish tradition, particularly of the dark palette of Velázquez, and of certain subjects unique to Spain, such as the *toreador* and guitar singer.⁵¹ Moreno's *Carmencita, The Woman from Seville*, which fits within this exotic Spanish vein that captivated the attention of French painters like Manet, represents a woman, most likely a flamenco dancer, from the Spanish southern region of Andalusia.⁵²

Moreno references the woman's exoticism through her clothing, accessories, and physiognomy that all reveal her cultural identity. Her Manila shawl and Spanish fan, for example, are local clothing styles originally associated with flamenco dancers. Her dark-colored hair, adorned with flowers and loose curls, further add to her allure. As was typical with Orientalist imagery of the period, its visual appeal depended largely on the artist's ability to romanticize and exaggerate locality, and, consequently, on the artist's disregard for historical accuracy. Linda Nochlin, informed by the postcolonial writings of Edward Said (1935-2003), has demonstrated how an absence of history, a lack of a Western presence, and a representation of leisurely activity are but a few of the attributes that make an Orientalist painting "successful."⁵³ Moreno's *Carmencita, The Woman from Seville* fits the bill as it is devoid of historical contextualization or narrative, and is instead focused solely on the woman's presence, her physical appeal, and exotic attributes.

Similarly, Laso's *Inhabitant of the Cordillera of Peru* and Jara's *The Wake* fit within these exotic manifestations of the picturesque, which Nochlin has defined as:

⁵¹ For an extended discussion on the attraction of Spanish painting in French art, see Gary Tinterow, *Manet/Velázquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003).

⁵² This portion of Spain, which was conquered by the Muslim Umayyad Dynasty in the 8th Century, was and still is defined by its Moorish culture.

⁵³ Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in *Politics of Vision* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 33-59.

the precious remnants of disappearing ways of life... transformed into subjects of aesthetic delectation in an imagery in which exotic human beings are integrated with a presumably defining and overtly limiting décor.”⁵⁴

In the case of Laso and Jara, these artists made a genuine attempt at historical accuracy, which was misinterpreted by French critics as a picturesque representation. Moreno, however, most likely consciously chose the romanticizing effects of *Carmencita*, *The Woman from Seville*, and therefore was operating like a French artist, as an outsider enamored by Spanish culture. Furthermore, Moreno has inverted the traditional order between colonizers and colonized, by exoticizing a region of his former colonial ruling power.

Although the exhibition venue and chronology of Moreno’s *Carmencita*, *The Woman from Seville* is unclear since *La Crónica* reports that it was shown at some point before 1899 while *Revista Ilustrada* says it was at the Salon of 1898.⁵⁵ Either way, it is clear from these reports that Moreno had attained a modest level of international success at the exhibitions of the Académie Julian by 1899. Born in Cúcuta, a small city in Eastern Colombia, Moreno traveled to Bogotá to study at the Escuela de Bellas Artes. In addition to his lessons at the Academy, Moreno also studied under Santiago Gutiérrez, who aided Moreno’s transfer to the Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City. From Mexico, Moreno traveled to Paris and enrolled at the Académie Julian, studying there intermittently from 1894 to 1896.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 50-51.

⁵⁵ Although Salvador Moreno’s name does not appear in the official catalogue of the Salon des Artistes Français of 1898, primary sources, such as L.N., “Salón de París,” *La Crónica*, no. 650 (September 7, 1899): n.p; and “Industria y bellas artes,” *Revista Ilustrada* 1, no. 2 (July 9, 1898): 28, have confirmed Moreno’s acceptance into the Salon of that year. Most likely this incongruity is due to the fact that Colombian critics referred to all Parisian exhibitions as the “Salon,” meaning that he could have shown this canvas at any Salon or at the exhibitions of the Académie Julian, in which he typically participated.

As mentioned by the *New York Times* in 1896, Moreno lived in Paris on a government scholarship with a “scanty allowance of \$68 per month.”⁵⁶ This meager stipend, however, did not deter him from obtaining the first prize in a competition with over 700 others. That the prize was prestigious is evident from an article that stated that “the certificate and medal were presented to him by a committee in his small room on the fifth floor of a house in the Rue Vivien... there was scarcely standing room for the deputation.”⁵⁷ Despite the financial restrictions under which many pensioned artists lived, including Garay and Cano, Moreno was able to attain serious recognition among the French artistic community. This honor in France, in turn, earned him respect in his native Colombia.

Moreno was featured in another article in *Revista Ilustrada* in which his successes abroad, and particularly at the Académie Julian, were described:

Our readers know that already enrolled at the Académie Julian he reached the second place in the first competition, and six months later, in 1896, the first place in the second competition, when presenting him with the corresponding diploma and medal, the men and women carriers did not fit in the small room that the favored artist occupied on the fifth floor. In recognition of this, the Congress of that same year did well in giving him a national pension, quite meager by the way, of \$50 in paper money, with which the artist has been unable to visit the masters and museums of other capital cities.⁵⁸

Despite Moreno’s recognition and his advance “of \$50 in paper money,” the artist was unable to complete his European pilgrimage, underscoring the financial obstacles that

⁵⁶ It is unclear whether Moreno’s allowance was in U.S. Dollars (USD), French Francs (FRF), or Colombian Pesos (COP), although \$68 USD in 1896 was equivalent to \$1,798 USD today.

⁵⁷ “Notes from Sister Republics,” *New York Times* (September 4, 1896): n.p.

⁵⁸ “Nuestros lectores saben ya que incorporado en la Escuela Julien alcanzo el Segundo premio en el primer concurso, y seis meses después, en 1896, el primero en el Segundo, al adjudicarle el cual con el diploma y la medalla correspondientes, los señores y señoritas portadores no cupieron en el cuartito de quinto piso que ocupaba el favorecido. En reconocimiento de esto, el Congreso del mismo año tuvo a bien concederle una pensión nacional, bien exigua por cierto, de \$50 en papel moneda, con la cual no ha podido todavía ir a conocer a los maestros y museos de otras capitales.” “Industria y bellas artes,” 28.

prevented a number of pensioned artists from maximizing their European experience. For these artists, including Moreno, Garay, and Cano whose trip to France under government sponsorship was their first and last, to have their time abroad cut short was particularly disappointing. Still, despite these obstacles Moreno was presented as a success in Colombian press as an artist who was able to attain international success in the most competitive and established art center with limited means and hard work.

Exposición del Club Brelán, Medellín 1899

When Colombian artists returned home eager to exhibit their Parisian canvases, they were confronted with a different reality, not only in terms of the limited number of exhibition venues available to them, but with a general lack of cultural appreciation that Colombian nationals shared toward the arts. Although the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá had helped to legitimize the arts and raise cultural awareness, the Colombian public remained largely distanced from this institution, primarily because of more pressing national issues that took precedence. Fine arts exhibitions then proved the most effective cultural catalyst. Moreover, they introduced works of art to the general public that were not imported from abroad, but rather created by their own artists, many of whom were art students. The sense of cultural appreciation that emerged from these exhibitions, and which undoubtedly fueled a sense of national pride, can best be appreciated in the Club Brelán Exhibition of 1899, held in the city of Medellín.

The exhibition, which opened at a turbulent time in Colombia's history during the outbreak of the Thousand Days War, was organized with the philanthropic intent of

raising funds for Cano. At that time, he was a pensioned artist in Paris, but his government funding had terminated early due to Colombia's precarious political position. The Club Brelán displayed over sixty works by Cano, and others by his pupils and colleagues, including Tobón Mejía. In that same year, the Escuela de Bellas Artes also organized an exhibition, but the residents of Medellín who could not travel to Bogotá to attend the exhibition because of the war instead attended the show at the Club Brelán. This increase in attendance incidentally helped the Club Brelán raise more than 3,500 French Francs, which were then sent to Cano in France, enabling him to continue his European travels.

The exhibition of the Club Brelán was not only well attended but was featured in the local Medellín press. The magazine *El Montañes* published "La fiesta de Cano" ("The Feast of Cano") as its May 1899 cover story, an indicator of the degree of coverage this exhibition received in comparison to other news stories. The charitable nature of this exhibition and the public's positive response to it also reflected a growing sense of awareness that the educational importance of Cano's trip was not only for himself, but for his country. That Cano understood the importance of his is evident in his own words when he vowed:

to succeed in making of my studies something useful to my Mother country... not leaving the possibility open so that someone could complain that the public's money had been wasted on me."⁵⁹

While Cano upheld his commitment to give back to his country, the Club Brelán honored his attitude with this exhibition. In so doing, it helped increase the visibility of the fine arts for the residents of smaller cities and towns in Colombia, while offering local artists

⁵⁹ "de lograr ser con mis estudios en alguna manera útil a mi Patria...no dejar campo para que nadie en ningún caso pueda lamentar que se hayan gastado dineros públicos en provecho mío." Francisco A. Cano, "Francisco A. Cano se despide," *El Espectador* (May 11, 1898): 1159.

an alternative exhibition venue outside the official and more central Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá.

A Changing Landscape:

The Exhibitions of 1899 and 1904 in Bogotá

In addition to the advancements in the arts that began taking place in the last years of the nineteenth century outside the capital city of Colombia, a considerable shift in the public's taste began to occur in Bogotá as well, especially between the 1899 and 1904 exhibitions. This change, brought about by economic progress and political stability also happened along generational lines, since after Garay's death in 1903 and Gutiérrez's in 1904, critics were, for the first time, distancing themselves from the traditionalism and Academicism of the last century, becoming more tolerant of, if not encouraging, new forms of expression. This shift toward artistic freedom, Alvaro Medina has argued, was reflected in the work of Santa María. Comparing Garay and Santa María as representing opposite ends of the artistic spectrum in Colombia, Medina states:

while Garay's style of painting was controlled and sentimental, a type of painting that maintained the proper composure of the Regeneración aristocracy, Santa María's style of painting possessed the sense of spontaneity and freshness of a live scene.⁶⁰

These characteristics of "spontaneity" and "freshness" were the distinguishing, as well as the most celebrated, trademarks of Impressionism in Colombia.

⁶⁰ "mientras la de Garay era una pintura arreglada y tenida de sentimentalismo, una pintura que guardaba la compostura propia de la aristocrática Regeneración, la de Santamaría poseía la espontaneidad y frescura de una escena viva." Medina, 91.

The greatest exponents of this new style were Acevedo Bernal and Santa María. Max Grillo, one of the earliest critics to fight in their favor, argued that, “finished lines [and] perfect drawing, did not endow contemporary painters with triumph, but rather it was the palpable emotion that resides in their canvases that did.”⁶¹ This transformation in style was noted by Cano, who also described Garay’s portraits as emotionless and stiff, providing:

...the impression of figures stamped on metal, meaning, that although the background recedes because of the value, color and perspective of lines, or because of all the painter’s resources, his portraits do not give the impression of solidity that one demands in a picture; there is no sentiment of that that cannot be seen, beyond the modeling, behind the object, there is nothing except emptiness, nothingness, a hole!⁶²

Cano’s representations of the emotional, previously not incorporated into portraiture, demonstrates a clear shift in aesthetic values in Colombia at this time.

This transformation can best be appreciated in portraiture, a genre that was no longer considered a “document of class,” as it had traditionally been in the work of Garay. According to Marta Traba, “documents of class,” were works whose purpose was to record, on a grand scale, the rising bourgeoisie and power players of the Regeneración. Garay’s portraits of Carlos Holguín and Manuel Antonio Sanclemente, and particularly his *Portrait of Rafael Núñez* (Fig. 9), for which he had been commissioned by President Núñez himself, all fit this bill.⁶³ After the Thousand Days War, the demands and

⁶¹ “las líneas acabadas, el dibujo perfecto, no da el triunfo a los pintores contemporáneos, sino la emoción palpitante que se asila en los lienzos.” Max Grillo, “A propósito de Acevedo Bernal,” *El Gráfico* 19, no.974 (April 1930): 2584.

⁶² “la impresión de figuras estampadas en metal, es decir, que aunque el fondo se aleje por el valor, por el colorido y por líneas de fuga, o por todos los recursos del pintor, sus retratos no dan la idea de solidez que se exige a una pintura; no hay el sentimiento de aquello que no se ve; más allá del modelo, detrás de un objeto, no queda sino el vacío, la nada, un hueco!” Cano, “Epifanio Garay,” 66.

⁶³ Marta Traba, “Triunfo de la República- Nacimiento de la burguesía, el retrato como documento de clase,” in *Historia abierta del arte Colombiano*, (Cali: La Tertulia, 1974; reprint, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1984), 61-86 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

aesthetics of portraiture changed, and although it continued to be an important source of income for artists, portraiture was no longer used as a tool of political ideology, but became, instead, a more creative form of expression.

One example of this creativity is evident in Cano's *Portrait of Carolina Cárdenas Núñez* (1925, Fig. 47). Carolina Cárdenas Núñez was a former pupil of his, as well as an important figure in Colombia's avant-garde scene of the 1930s. In representing what Traba has defined as "much more solidarity in class with the model, than discrepancy," Cano has altered his earlier more static manner of representing his subject in favor of a more casual feel.⁶⁴ Although Carolina Cárdenas's relaxed pose and confident gaze reflect Cano's closeness with his sitter, her fitted clothes and short haircut "speak of an urban life involved in fashion and in the style of the 'crazy 20s.'" ⁶⁵ As Santiago Londoño Vélez has argued, these attributes gave the figure a more mysterious, wild, and even erotic air.⁶⁶

Acevedo Bernal's depiction of his wife, *Portrait of Rosa Biester de Acevedo* (Fig. 54), painted in 1905, represents an even greater sense of familiarity and kinship, visible not only in the loose brushwork and relaxed gesture of the woman, Rosa Biester, but also in her prominence in the picture plane. More importantly, this portrait by Acevedo Bernal exemplifies how his work functioned as a stylistic intermediary between the radicalism of Santa María and the Academism of Garay. From a political perspective, critics interpreted Acevedo Bernal's loose brushwork as a reflection of his independent political attitudes. Even conservative critics like C.D., who praised Garay's nationalist style of painting,

⁶⁴ "mucha mayor solidaridad de clase con el modelo, que discrepancia." *Ibid.*, 81 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁶⁵ "hablan de una vida urbana involucrada en la moda y en el estilo de los 'locos años 20.'" Santiago Londoño Vélez, "Imágenes de la mujer en el arte colombiano," in *Las mujeres en la historia de Colombia*, ed. Magdala Velásquez Toro (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 1995), 293.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

found comfort in the work of Acevedo Bernal, whose portraits he believed to “give life to men.”⁶⁷ Despite Acevedo Bernal’s positive reception, Garay continued to be the preferred artist of the Regeneración era and thus of the exhibition of 1899, demonstrating the important role that political ideology played in Colombian art criticism.

A division emerged between the conservative followers of Garay who were allies of the Regeneración and the liberal allies of Acevedo Bernal.⁶⁸ Alvaro Medina has argued that this artistic preference was based on politics, and that although Acevedo Bernal had no clear political affiliation, he was distant enough from the Regeneración to serve the purposes of the liberal press.⁶⁹ This political favoritism was also noted by a visitor to the 1899 exhibition, Carlos Miguel Pizarro, who accused the jury of favoring certain Regeneración artists, like Garay, at the expense of those with more liberal and avant-garde leanings like Acevedo Bernal.⁷⁰ In fact, political affiliations played an integral role in how the works of these artists were received in both the 1899 and 1904 exhibitions, as well as in how these artists’ careers developed.

The Issue of Female Nudity at the Exposición de Bellas Artes of 1899

While Garay was clearly favored by the conservative press, and Acevedo Bernal by the liberal critics of *El Heraldo*, Santa María simply went unnoticed at the 1899

⁶⁷ C.D., “Retratos y paisajes,” *La Crónica*, no. 634 (August 19, 1899): n.p.

⁶⁸ Medina, 43.

⁶⁹ Alvaro Medina, “La Guerra de los Mil Días y el arte colombiano de la Regeneración,” in *El Nuevo Pensamiento Colombiano* (Bogotá: Fedelco, 1977), 78.

⁷⁰ Pizarro, 3-4.

Exposición de Bellas Artes. Garay's popularity, according to Carlos Miguel Pizarro, was due to the fact that he was "the soul of the exhibition," as well as "a member of the Board of the National Exhibition, and Director of Academy, as well as Professor and Exhibitor."⁷¹ Devoid of these roles and titles, Santa María was a simple, yet foreign, exhibitor and although this can account for his lack of mention by the Colombian press, it seems more likely that the critics did not mention him because they did not understand such a new style. Eduardo Serrano noted:

As if the reputation of an established and recognized artist in the Parisian Salons, which justified his appointment as a juror, was not sufficient merit for the critics to attribute an unprejudiced appreciation of his work. Or as if the critics, fearful of confronting an art that was so different from what they knew, preferred not to speak rather than be mistaken.⁷²

Furthermore, the public's incapacity to decipher or understand Santa María's style of painting demonstrates, a point to which Beatriz González has alluded, how these external and avant-garde influences perplexed and, in turn, jumpstarted the birth of Colombian art criticism.

The biggest point of contention among critics at the exhibition of 1899 was not the Impressionist work of Santa María, but rather the work of Garay. Although Garay exhibited his usual portraits of the social elite and former presidents and dignitaries, he also exhibited *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* (Fig. 14). This canvas was the second nude to have ever been exhibited in Colombia, after Santiago Gutiérrez's *The Huntress of the Andes* (Fig. 13). But perhaps more importantly, it was the first nude

⁷¹ "alma de la Exposición ...miembro de la Junta de la Exposición Nacional, ya como Rector de Bellas Artes, como Maestro y como Expositor." Ibid., 7.

⁷² "como si la reputación de artista expuesto y mencionado en los Salones de París, que le había valido su designación como jurado, no fuera suficiente para ameritar una apreciación desprejuiciada de su obra. O como si los críticos tuvieran miedo de confrontar un arte tan distinto del que conocían y prefieran callar a equivocarse." Serrano, 49-50.

to have been painted and exhibited by a Colombian, and not Mexican artist.⁷³ The rare display of a female nude as well as its shocking moral value captivated the attention of the Colombian people. Regardless of whether Garay depicted a courtesan, as in Manet's *Olympia*, or a mythological personage as in Gutiérrez's *The Huntress of the Andes* or Alexander Cabanel's *The Birth of Venus* (1863), the female nude subject was problematic in Colombia. In fact, the issue of nudity created such controversy that the canvas was exhibited separately from the other works of art and was prefaced with a warning about its immorality, effectively discouraging many from entering.⁷⁴

The warnings of obscenity as well as the painting's sequestered location also, somewhat ironically, served to call attention to the painting. Its large size (4.5 x 6.5 feet) and unusual subject matter brought it even more notice. An installation view of the 1899 exhibition (Fig. 82) reveals that most of the canvases displayed were much more modest in size than Garay's canvas. Although it is difficult to determine the content of the canvases on display from the installation view, most of them appear to be portraits and traditional religious paintings, making the presence of Garay's nude painting all the more unusual and shocking, despite its representation of a biblical theme. These installation photographs also reveal a cluttered and distracting exhibition space with plants and floral bouquets positioned throughout the rooms.

The painting's nudity, however, was not as great a problem as the manner in which the female nude was represented. Described as stiff, cold, awkward, and literally dead, Garay's nude shocked viewers. In one of the earliest and most important examples

⁷³ González, 107. Also, according to *Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez: pasión y destino* (Toluca: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1993), 106, Gutiérrez's *Huntress of the Andes* was the first nude in Mexican painting, despite being exhibited in Bogotá in 1875.

⁷⁴ "Notas sobre la exposición," *El Heraldo* (September 5, 1899): n.p.

of Colombian art criticism, *Exposición nacional de bellas artes de 1899: los artistas y sus críticos*, Jacinto Albarracín described the woman's body as a cadaver, recalling the smell "of bodies in decomposition."⁷⁵ Albarracín furthered this idea by citing other critics' similar characterizations. He notes, for example, that an article from the September 10, 1899 issue of *El Tío Juan*, described the woman's body as " 'inanimate and already in decomposition...[but] with visible signs of being barely asleep.' "⁷⁶ Although the issue of nudity was itself a major problem, it seems, based on these observations, that her cadaver-like representation particularly irritated visitors and accounted for the negative criticism. The negative comments about *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* continued as more time passed as evidenced in a 1903 remark by Cano who said he had yet to hear a positive and clear interpretation of the painting.⁷⁷

Ironically, Garay's choice of subject matter was actually based on a story from the Bible. Adding to the controversy of the painting was the rumor, that it had been based on a photograph. This accusation was first put forth on October 4, 1899, by Grillo, a critic who wrote in *El Autonomista*:

The manner in which I treated the artist in the cited article, was benevolent, even affectionate. I avoided, for example, to write down the many defects from which the canvas *The Woman of the Levite* suffered, and to not have the shame of proclaiming that it had been taken from a photograph (which I have had in my hands), I prefer not to mention this painting... To tell a painter that he copied a nude from a photograph is like proving to a poet that he plagiarized a poem word for word. Laziness is never an excuse in works of art.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ "de los cuerpos en descomposición." Jacinto Albarracín, *Exposición nacional de bellas artes de 1899: los artistas y sus críticos* (Bogotá: Imprenta de Medardo Rivas, 1899), 5.

⁷⁶ " 'inanimado y ya en descomposición... con apariencias visibles de estar apenas dormida.' " Ibid., 5-6.

⁷⁷ Cano, "Epifanio Garay," 69.

⁷⁸ "La manera como trate al artista en el artículo citado, fue benévola, hasta cariñosa. Prescindi, por ejemplo, de anotar los muchos defectos de que adolece el lienzo de *La Mujer del Levita*, y para no tener la pena de manifestar que había sido tomado de fotografía (la que he tenido en mis manos), prefiero no mencionar ese cuadro.... Decirle a un pintor que ha copiado el desnudo de fotograma, es como comprobarle

Grillo's characterization of Garay as a "lazy" artist who had "plagiarized" and copied the nude from a photograph was particularly damaging to Garay's reputation.

The use of photography implied that Garay was unable to draw from a live model. For Garay, who had studied the human figure from life at the Académie Julian, this accusation was particularly hurtful. Since his career had been established largely on the basis of commissioned portraits, it also threatened his livelihood. A Parisian-trained artist and director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Garay's reputation had been solidified largely by his overseas achievements. Grillo's critique attempted to dismantle the artist's credibility by calling into question his professionalism and sense of morality.

Although Grillo did not explicitly say it, the use of photography could have also implied the use of pornography. This association held true in France, for example, where pornographic images had supplemented the study and painting of the female nude. Courbet's scandalous representations of women, and in the case of *The Origin of the World* (1866), of their reproductive organs, were reported to have been taken directly from photographs.⁷⁹ In Colombia, the use of pornographic images would have been particularly disreputable since, aside from the moral issues, they would have alluded to the greater societal problems of prostitution and syphilis, which as argued by J.E. Jaramillo Zuluaga, accounted for the lack of mention of eroticism in Colombian literature.⁸⁰ The issue of prostitution in Colombia also corresponded to the larger issue of

a un poeta que ha plagiado literalmente un poema. La pereza nunca es razón disculpativa en las obras de arte." Max Grillo, "Por la crítica," *El Autonomista* (October 4, 1899): n.p.

⁷⁹ For an extended discussion on Courbet's canvas *The Origin of the World*, see Linda Nochlin, "Courbet's *L'origine du monde*: The Origin without an Original," *October* 37 (Summer 1986): 76-86.

⁸⁰ J. E. Jaramillo Zuluaga, "El deseo y el decoro en la novela colombiana del siglo XX," *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico* 29, no. 30 (1992) [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/publicacionesbanrep/boletin/boleti5/bol30/deseo1.htm>

urban life, since rural women who migrated to Bogotá, typically turned to prostitution if they could not find other employment. Although prostitution and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases does not directly relate to *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains*, it does provide a social backdrop from which to understand this suggestion of impropriety.

Garay, enraged at these allegations, defended his profession and honor by answering Grillo in another issue of *El Autonomista*, dated three days later, in which he wrote the following message:

In *El Tío Juan*, a newspaper that is edited by the same press as EL AUTONOMISTA, Dr. Grillo should have read the proofs, which deny the accusation of the photograph. Witnesses present in the execution of my canvas, such as misters Valenzuela (Julio and Carlos), Lehner, Zerda, Martín, Cortes, Torres Medina, Guell, Cuellas and many others, declare the opposite of the fable, which my enemies have invented.⁸¹

Mentioning witnesses, including his friend and artist Valenzuela, Garay argued against Grillo and against his accusation that the painting had been based on a photograph. In this same article, Garay also cited “studying and working in Europe,” as well as his achievements in Paris at the Salon des Artistes Français and the Académie Julian as proof of his talent and entitlement.⁸² Garay went on to criticize Grillo, an established poet, as an inadequate and inexperienced art critic.

The complexity of *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains*, which sparked fierce debate among critics at the time, has also interested Colombian scholars of

⁸¹ “En *El Tío Juan*, periódico que se edita en la misma imprenta que EL AUTONOMISTA, debió leer el doctor Grillo las pruebas que desvanecen la especie de la fotografía. Testigos presenciales de la ejecución de mi obra, tales como los señores Valenzuelas (Julio y Carlos), Lehner, Zerda, Martín, Cortes, Torres Medina, Guell, Cuellar y otros muchos, declaran en sentido contrario al de la fabula inventada por mis malquerientes.” Epifanio Garay, “Contra-crítica,” *El Autonomista* (October 7, 1899): n.p.

⁸² “estudiando y trabajando en Europa.” Ibid.

the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, particularly Londoño Vélez and Medina. Contrary to the earlier comments of Albarracín and Grillo, Londoño Vélez has argued that what was most controversial about Garay's painting was his display of a biblical theme in a pagan manner and not necessarily the artist's representation of the woman or his use of a photograph.⁸³ The woman's indirect gaze and slightly hidden face, Londoño Vélez argues, suggests an erotic interpretation. On the other hand, Medina opines that Garay's painting, which he believes to be based on Cabanel's *The Birth of Venus* (1863) (Fig. 83), was not profane, but mundane.⁸⁴ Medina's suggestion that Garay copied his nude from Cabanel implies Garay's lack of originality, while at the same time reveals his acute awareness of and desire to emulate current Parisian Salon trends.⁸⁵

To further prove his point that Garay was an unoriginal artist, Medina points out that although Acevedo Bernal painted biblical subjects, he was adventurous enough to omit certain traditional details from religious paintings, citing Acevedo Bernal's omission of a dove in *The Baptism of Jesus*. Although this is a minor detail, Medina has argued that it was sufficiently unorthodox and therefore significant. He holds up what he sees as Acevedo Bernal's progressiveness while casting down Garay's traditionalism as evident in his statement: "Acevedo Bernal is a profaner of religious themes, but at least not as a mundane artist, an attitude that in Garay is evident."⁸⁶ By Medina's count, creativity could be understood as a progressive tool through which Colombian artists could break

⁸³ Londoño Vélez, 284-285.

⁸⁴ Medina, *Procesos del arte en Colombia*, 53.

⁸⁵ Although the female in *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* recalls the pose of Cabanel's nude, it also brings to mind other recognizable nudes of the period, painted by Salon artists such as Charles Chaplin (1825-1891) and E. A. Carolus-Duran.

⁸⁶ "Acevedo Bernal es un profanizador de la temática religiosa, mas no como un mundano, actitud que en Garay si es evidente." Ibid.

with the traditionalism of the past by experimenting with new symbols and forms of representation.

In Argentina, as in Colombia, the nude was a contentious subject though it was particularly common among Parisian-trained artists such as Eduardo Sívori and Eduardo Schiaffino. Sívori's *The Maid Awakening* (Fig. 79), exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français of 1887, was discussed in more than ten French periodicals, including *Le Charivari* and *L'Eco de Paris*. All of these criticisms, compiled by the Argentine press in *El Diario*, criticized the woman's nudity in Schiaffino's painting as too natural, grotesque, or even seductive. The commentaries focused on one issue--the woman's nudity, disregarding altogether any reference to the artist's ethnicity or background. Despite these varied criticisms and their emphasis on the woman's nudity, Sívori did not hesitate exhibiting the painting in Buenos Aires that same year. The conservative Argentinean press, *El Censor*, angrily responded by attacking not only the woman's nudity, but her social status. One critic noted, " 'Who would ever think of painting such nonsense, especially when the servant, so ugly, disheveled and dirty, has been chosen as the model?' " ⁸⁷ Not surprisingly, the woman's nudity came under attack, although in the case of Sívori, the realism of *The Maid Awakening* and his decision to represent a workingwoman rather than a goddess or biblical character was particularly infuriating for the Argentinean audience, who expected a theme of higher intellectual or historical importance.

Two years later, Eduardo Schiaffino exhibited *After the Bath* (Fig. 84) at the Exposition Universelle of 1889 in Paris, and again the same year in Buenos Aires, where

⁸⁷ "¿A quien se le ocurre pintar semejante majadería, sobre todo cuando la sirvienta es tan fea, tan desgreñada y tan sucia como la que el ha elegido de modelo?" Malosetti Costa, *El más viejo de los jóvenes*, 77.

the painting was intended to demonstrate the accomplishments of Argentina's pensioned artists. *After the Bath* as its name implies, is a depiction of a woman in her undergarments, dressing and fixing her hair in the privacy of her boudoir. Though she was not completely nude, the painting was met with outrage. Unlike Sívori, however, whose personal financial stability allowed him to travel independently, Schiaffino depended on government funding. Critics primarily from *El Nacional*, then, were angered that Argentina was not investing its money "in something useful," and was "tossing it away."⁸⁸ Despite the efforts of Schiaffino to represent a clothed woman instead of a nude one like Sívori had done, the conservative critics clearly resented even the faintest reference to female intimacy.

As Malosetti Costa pointed out, the fact that Sívori and Schiaffino exhibited nudes in Argentina at all is, in and of itself, a modern concept.⁸⁹ The same can be said of Garay, since in 1899 he was the only Colombian artist to have exhibited a female nude. Although Cano and Santa María painted nude subjects, these were not completed until the early twentieth century and were typically restricted to private collections, making Garay's *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* a unique and important example in the history of Colombian art. Cano's pupil, Tobón Mejía, Débora Arango, and other figurative artists of the twentieth century furthered the idea of the female nude by introducing Symbolist ideas of the woman as a *femme-fatale*. One such example is Tobón Mejía's *Salome* (1910, Fig. 23). The development of the nude from a biblical subject to an erotic one, demonstrates the important precedent set by these Colombian travelers.

⁸⁸ "en algo útil...tirada a la calle." Malosetti Costa, *Los primeros modernos*, 230.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

The Exposición de Bellas Artes of 1899, which took place at the onset of the Thousand Days War, was the last fine arts exhibition of the nineteenth century in Colombia. After the war terminated in 1902 and Panama seceded from the union in 1903, the Escuela de Bellas Artes reopened and participated in the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública of 1904. Unlike the earlier major exhibitions of 1886 and 1899, this one was organized by the government as part of a larger national effort to unite and advance the country. Under different political circumstances, the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública ushered in a new era of optimism, marked by increased economic development and political stability. This newfound sense of hope, which also permeated the arts, helped to bury the traditionalism of the last century, while promoting the development of modernism in the twentieth.

Impressionism at the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública

Following the deaths of Garay and Santiago Gutiérrez in 1903 and 1904, respectively, and the appointment of Santa María as director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, the artistic landscape in Colombia began to show signs of change. Although the majority of the critics of the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública encouraged these progressive transformations, there remained some, who, along with the public at large, were still hesitant about such modern styles as Impressionism. Conservative critics like Albarracín seemingly approved of the work of Santa María, but in reality these endorsements were half-hearted at best. In one article, for example, Albarracín wrote, “How can one find or polish a diamond among this rotting place of politics and bad

art?”⁹⁰ Among collectors, the work of Santa María was not well received, nor was it highly sought after, as demonstrated by Eduardo Serrano, who pointed out that very few paintings by the artist were acquired at the time.⁹¹ Despite hesitations, and a few unsupportive critics, the importance of the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública as a stepping-stone toward modernism can best be appreciated by Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo’s comparison of this exhibition in Colombia to the groundbreaking Salon des Refusés of 1863 in Paris.⁹²

Santa María, as professor and director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, was in charge of organizing the fine arts section of the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública. He included a number of his own works: *Seine Laundresses* (Fig. 36), *The Gleaners* (Fig. 41), and *The Child’s Bath* (Fig. 57). Like Garay at the Exposición de Bellas Artes of 1899, Santa María’s significant presence at the 1904 exhibition, as well as his roles within the Academy facilitated the positive reception of his work, which was primarily Impressionist. As a result, the style of Impressionism, previously ignored, misunderstood, and ridiculed by the Colombian critics, finally found a niche of supporters. In response to this new style, Colombian newspapers and periodicals such as *Revista contemporánea*, published numerous articles that attempted to define Impressionism, the color theories of Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889), and the techniques of paint application. Critics such as Baldomero Sanín Cano applauded the Impressionist work of Santa María, which he characterized by:

⁹⁰ “¿Como ha de encontrarse o de brillar el diamante entre este pudridero de política y de malas artes?” Jacinto Albarracín, “Exposición de bellas artes,” *Sur América* (July 18, 1904): 1.

⁹¹ Serrano, 87.

⁹² Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo, *La miniatura, la pintura y el grabado en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1982), 201.

the vigorous temperament of a paint brush that laughs at the difficulties of drawing, and is guided by an infinitesimal appreciation for shades; the trace of a temperament which appears to have been created to capture all the poetry of the ephemeral during the luminous hours.⁹³

Using technical jargon, this critic and others applauded Santa María's work for the freedom and spontaneity of his paint application, as well as for its varied color palette.

Stylistic concerns were not the only determining factor in the reception of Santa María's work; thematic content was also a critical component, as evidenced in Sanín Cano's statement of how Santa María's canvases, and *The Gleaners* in particular, represented "the landscapes of the savannah [and] the light of Bogotá."⁹⁴ With regards to *Seine Laundresses*, Sanín Cano again commented on technique, noting how Santa María, "like many other modern painters, has lost interest in line, because it is not the soul of things."⁹⁵ As understood by Sanín Cano and others, Impressionism was defined according to aesthetics, and it was characterized by a spontaneous style of painting and defined as the antithesis of line drawing, which had dominated the Academism of the previous decades and which had served as the basis for art education at the Escuela de Bellas Artes.

Santa María's popularity was established with the help of critics such as Grillo and Sanín Cano, as well as through the writings of fellow artists, like Cano. Even before the exhibition of 1904, Cano was already celebrating Santa María's work and in particular

⁹³ "un temperamento vigoroso, de un pincel que se burla de las dificultades del dibujo guiado por una apreciación infinitesimal de los matices; la huella de un temperamento que parece formado para captar en horas luminosas toda la poesía de lo efímero." Baldomero Sanín Cano, "El Impresionismo en Bogotá," *Revista contemporánea* 1, no. 2 (November 1904): 156.

⁹⁴ "los paisajes de la Sabana, la luz de Bogotá." *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹⁵ "como otros muchos pintores modernos, se ha desentendido de la línea porque ella no es el alma de las cosas." Baldomero Sanín Cano, "El Impresionismo en Bogotá," *Revista contemporánea* 1, no. 4 (January 1905): 359.

his use of color in an inventive and personalized manner. In his magazine *Lectura y Arte*, Cano wrote:

The word is out: *Modernism, Impressionism (Colorism, I would say)*, — it's the school to which— according to the criticisms and if understood correctly from the beautiful article written by B. Sanín Cano, who noted his honorable success— Santamaría belongs.⁹⁶

This passage not only reaffirms Cano's admiration for Santa María but illustrates the importance of writer-artist alliances in establishing the careers of progressive Latin American artists such as Santa María.⁹⁷

Towards Modernism:

Exposición del Centenario, Bogotá 1910

Like the 1904 exhibition, the Exposición del Centenario of 1910 also reflected considerable change of artistic taste in Colombia. Artists such as Acevedo Bernal and Valenzuela who previously had been ignored were finally recognized. Emerging artists, many still students at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, also displayed their works for the first time. Although Acevedo Bernal was in Paris for the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública in 1904 and therefore did not submit any paintings, he was present in 1910 at the Exposición del Centenario in Bogotá where he exhibited a number of works.

⁹⁶ “Ya salio la palabra: *Modernismo, Impresionismo (Colorismo* diria yo),- — es la escuela á la cual—según informes y deduciéndolo del bello articulo de B. Sanín Cano, quien dio la noticia del honroso éxito-- pertenece Santamaria como pintor.” Francisco A. Cano, “Un artista,” *Lectura y Arte*, no. 7/8 (November 1903): 127.

⁹⁷ Traba, in “Introduction,” 2, has expanded on the importance of these writer-artist alliances in the development of Modernism, citing the example of Argentinean artist Xul Solar (1887-1963), whose work was supported by the writers of the magazine *Martín Fierro*.

Dwarfed by Garay's presence at the 1899 exhibition and unable to compete with Santa María in 1904, Acevedo Bernal's work was finally recognized at the Exposición del Centenario, where he exhibited the Impressionist canvas, *Portrait of Rosa Biester de Acevedo*, for which he received a medal of honor.

Valenzuela is another artist whose work was discovered and applauded at the exhibition of 1910 and who, until recently, had gone largely unnoticed by Colombian scholars. Although Valenzuela was trained in Italy rather than France, his work was influenced by his experience in Europe, as seen in the portrait of his mother (Fig. 49). Valenzuela rarely exhibited his work either in Colombia or abroad, but at the exhibition of 1910 in Bogotá, Valenzuela showed over forty paintings, including twenty-eight landscapes and the pendant portraits of his parents, Elena and Julio. Valenzuela's work was well received by critics, and especially by Joaquín Tiberio Galvis, who applauded these canvases for their intensity in color and distinctive patterns, considering them to be some of the best paintings at the exhibition.⁹⁸

The 1910 exhibition not only allowed for marginal artists like Acevedo Bernal and Valenzuela to gain popularity, but it also furthered the progressive advances of the 1904 exhibition. The 1910 exhibition saw the participation of a new generation of artists, such as Domingo Moreno Otero (1882-1948) and Fidolo Alfonso González Camargo (1883-1941), who were too young to have exhibited their works in the earlier exhibits of 1886, 1899, and 1904, and whose careers were just being launched. These artists, who were educated at the Escuela de Bellas Artes under the professorship of Santa María and Acevedo Bernal, had not lived through the artistic debates generated by their predecessors. In fact, they came of age at a different moment in the history of Colombian

⁹⁸ Joaquín Tiberio Galvis, "Pabellón de bellas artes," *El Artista*, no. 172 (August 27, 1910): n.p.

art when the options in terms of an art education were greater, when the thematic and stylistic limitations of art were fewer, when the European importations were more pronounced, and when the flowering of modernism was underway.

Santa María's rise to fame at the 1904 exhibition was very different from what had happened just five years earlier at the exhibition of 1899, and what would happen five years later in 1910, when he was congratulated for having organized a successful show with over ninety participating artists, yet criticized for his own work which was thought to be poor and degenerate. Eduardo Serrano has argued that a change in government in 1909, and not a transformation in style, led to a change in how critics perceived Santa María's work, directorship, and ability to properly manage the Escuela de Bellas Artes.⁹⁹ Just as for the exhibition of 1899, politics also played an important role in the perception of these artists. Nevertheless, there was also a considerable stylistic shift in the work of Santa María that deserves scholarly consideration.

Santa María's *Portrait of María Mancini on Horseback* (1907, Fig. 63) demonstrated a radical departure from the artist's earlier Impressionist canvases. Accepted later into the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts of 1914, where it was exhibited under the title, *Return from the Market*,¹⁰⁰ this canvas was the subject in 1910 of an article by Colombian critic Tiberio Galvis, who wrote:

the artist [had] lost sight of the truth of nature and painted figures who were too long, perhaps caricaturing El Greco, mounted on horses that could have served as models for the figures."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Serrano, 116.

¹⁰⁰ Gaïté Dugnat, *Les catalogues des salons de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 5 (Paris: l'Échelle de Jacob, 2000-2005), lists Santa María's canvas under the French title *Retour du marché*, no. 1074 in the Section of Painting.

¹⁰¹ "perdió de vista el artista la verdad de la naturaleza y pinto unas figuras demasiado largas, quizá caricaturando al Greco, trepadas sobre unos caballos que bien pudieran servir de modelo para las figuras." Galvis, n.p.

On the other hand, Grillo applauded Santa María's canvas, admiring the artist's thick paint application, his use of a spatula, the physical distortions of the women's body, and the expressive movement of the palm trees. Grillo even described the manner in which to view these expressionist canvases:

If one approaches the canvas, one only sees blues, whites, greens, and grays. If one stops to contemplate the canvas from afar, one will slowly start to see the pools arising, inside which one could submerge the arm; the light descend from an absent sky; the flowers tremble in their aquatic stems; and a superior harmony invades us.¹⁰²

Indeed *Portrait of María Mancini on Horseback* represented a new direction in Santa María's work, toward a more expressive and emotional interpretation of nature, in the style of Van Gogh. According to Carmen Ortega Ricaurte, this canvas was not only the most influential painting at the exhibition but in the history of Colombian art because it "broke away with the rigid parameters established by the Academy."¹⁰³ Though to assert that one painting changed the course of Colombian art history is clearly an exaggeration, it is true that Santa María, together with Acevedo Bernal, Valenzuela, and others involved with this 1910 exhibition, played an integral role in revolutionizing the arts and in establishing the idea that modern painting was not based merely on line drawing, illusionism, or modeling, but rather also included expressive brushwork, vibrant colors and elaborate patterns.

¹⁰² "Acercase el espectador a las telas y solo ve manchas azules, blancas, verdes, grises. Detiénese a contemplar desde lejos los cuadros y, lentamente, va viendo surgir los estanques, en donde le parece que pudiera sumergir el brazo; la luz descende de un cielo ausente; las flores se agitan en sus tallos acuáticos, y una armonía superior nos invade." Max Grillo, "Andrés de Santa María Pintor Insigne," *Revista de América* 3, no. 7 (July 1945): 69.

¹⁰³ "rompió con los rígidos parámetros establecidos por la Academia." Carmen Ortega Ricaurte, "En la playa de Macuto," in *Revista Credencial Historia*, no. 111 (March 1999) [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/revistas/credencial/marzo1999/111enlaplaya.htm>

The Inconsistencies of Colombian Art Criticism

The first sign that Colombian art critics were untrained can be seen in the emphasis they placed on formal qualities at the expense of thematic content. One critic, when discussing the work of Santiago Gutiérrez, repeatedly mentioned the artist's technical flaws as the sole measure of his success:

Anywhere, and with more appropriate light, the figures of Mr. Gutiérrez will not cease from being exaggeratingly red, the half-tints appear always dirty, the shadows lack transparency, and their models remain mute.¹⁰⁴

In emphasizing the artist's failure to paint in a realist manner, the critic pointed to the technical aspects of painting at the expense of subject matter. This demonstrates the extent to which the critics focused on face value rather than stylistic traits or outside thematic references. This overemphasis on the technical can also be seen in the writings of Grillo and Sanín Cano for the *Revista contemporánea*, in which they placed particular attention on the colors and paint application of Impressionism, rather than on interpretive analysis.

Despite this focus on the formal qualities of art, critics made an attempt to engage in relevant and contemporary debates regarding the value of a copy as either a finished work or educational tool. In *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*, some critics argued that it was acceptable for an artist to copy paintings, something that Garay had done in Paris in order to make a living. Most agreed, however, that:

¹⁰⁴ “En cualquier parte, y con la luz mas propicia, las carnaciones del señor Gutiérrez no dejarán de ser exageradamente rojas, las medias tintas aparecerán siempre sucias, las sombras carecerán de transparencia, y sus modelos permanecerán mudos.” “La exposición de pintura,” *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* 5, no. 106 (December 15, 1886): 150.

the painter should not be a simple copyist; [since] he invents even when he is limited to translating, because what nature creates through a system of mediums and values, he is obliged to execute by a different system of values and mediums.¹⁰⁵

Cano was also a strong advocate of copying, but only as an academic exercise in an artist's attempts to enhance and improve the reproduction.¹⁰⁶ In fact, Cano's painting, *The Secretary of the School of Fine Arts* (1929, Fig. 85), which features a reproduction of *The Last Supper* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770), speaks to Cano's belief in copying paintings as an academic tool.¹⁰⁷

Like the exhibition of 1899 that generated heated debates between Garay and Grillo, the exhibition of 1904 also sparked fierce competition, this time Grillo and Sanín Cano. At the heart of their debate was being able to properly define Impressionism and its impact in Colombia as well as to define its practitioners. Alvaro Medina has referred to this friction as “a famous polemic in the fine arts because it marked the cycle of the opening of the anti-academism.”¹⁰⁸ Although Medina is not referring specifically to the polemic between Grillo and Sanín Cano, which was based on the inability of both critics to properly define the style of Impressionism, he does call attention to the importance of this discord in encouraging critics and artists to question innovative styles.

Grillo was a controversial critic, even among artists, and his accusation that Garay based his nude on a photograph referred to the larger problem of who was entitled to

¹⁰⁵ “el pintor no debe ser un simple copista: el inventa aun cuando se limite a traducir, porque lo que la naturaleza ejecuta por un sistema de medios y valores, el esta obligado a ejecutarlo por otro sistema diferente de valores y medios.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Cano, “Epifanio Garay,” 65.

¹⁰⁷ Olga Acosta Luna, “El secretario de la Escuela de Bellas Artes,” *Cuadernos de Curaduría* 7 (July 2008) [journal online]; available from <http://redmuseo.javeriana.edu.co/inbox/files/docs/elsecretario07.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ “una polémica, famosa en la plástica nacional por ser la que marco el ciclo de la apertura antiacademicista.” Medina, *Procesos del arte en Colombia*, 68.

critique artists. Garay responded to Grillo's assertion by detailing the rights of entitlement, and suggesting that artists can only be judged by their peers. In *El Autonomista*, Garay stated:

Be judged by your equals, you once said...[and] I think that I can request to whomever would like to be my critic that they had also traveled, visited galleries and studies, and studied the works of ancient and modern master, that they had read many of the works of illustrated critics.¹⁰⁹

Garay's commentary expresses the frustrations he felt when negatively reviewed, as well as the extent to which he believed Grillo was unqualified. The same problem existed for exhibition judges as well since in Colombia, the arts were not fully developed with regards to the standards by which judges were supposed to put forth their opinions. The judges of the 1899 exhibition themselves articulated this frustration.¹¹⁰

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth –century, art criticism in Colombia had not yet matured; to add to its problems, it was also intensely political and personal. As seen in the life of Santa María, who was admired by the Colombian press in 1904 and then despised in 1910, as well as in the career of Garay, who was consistently favored by the conservative press and allies of the *Regeneración*, politics played an influential role in the reception of their work. Acevedo Bernal was an artist that, throughout much of his career, was either underappreciated by the critics or overshadowed by the success of his contemporaries. Colombian artists were conscious of what they painted and for whom, and were fully aware of these social, cultural, and political forces at play when they created and exhibited their compositions. Even when they dared to be different, like

¹⁰⁹ “*Ser juzgado por sus pares*, dijo usted una vez... [y] creo que puedo exigir al que quiera ser mi crítico que haya viajado también, que haya visitado galerías y talleres, que haya estudiado las obras de los maestros antiguos y modernos, que haya leído muchas obras de críticas ilustrada.” Garay, “Contra-crítica,” n.p.

¹¹⁰ “Del jurado de la sección de bellas artes en la exposición del 20 de Julio de 1899,” *Revista Ilustrada* 1, no. 16 & 17 (September 30, 1899): 243-258.

Garay in 1899 with *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* and Santa María in 1910 with *Portrait of María Mancini on Horseback*, they were mindful of the inevitable and unfortunately damaging consequences of challenging orthodoxy.

Chapter 4

Back Home

After Paris, Colombian artists customarily returned to Bogotá, and in most cases, they did so permanently. With the exception of Acevedo Bernal, who served as consul in Rome, and Santa María and Tobón Mejía, who spent their later lives in Europe, the majority of these artists, including Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, Moreno, Manrique, Gaviria, Montoya, and Bolívar resettled in their home country. Determined to give back to their people, especially in the case of pensioned travelers, many took their roles as educators and innovators in Colombia very seriously. Urdaneta, for example, who had personally financed his trip to Paris and was one of the earliest to return from this artistic voyage

established, six years after his arrival, the Escuela de Bellas Artes, which at the time was the first and only official art establishment in the country. As a result of the prominent role of this institution, the next generation of artists gravitated towards it.

With the idea of advancing the arts in Colombia as well as their own careers, Garay, Cano, Santa María, and Acevedo Bernal joined the faculty of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. These artists expanded and, in some instances, revolutionized the curriculum based on what they had learned and seen while abroad. In fact, the formative and most influential years of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, as proposed in this study, as well as by Marta Fajardo de Rueda, happened at the turn of the century when “some of the tendencies of European art were introduced.”¹ In this regard, the Escuela de Bellas Artes and its educators played an influential role in the diffusion of outside influences in Colombia, as well as in the development of modern art in the country.

This transition that occurred at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, from a traditional art institution to a more avant-garde one has been discussed by Fajardo de Rueda, with regards to one artist, Santa María, but never with relation to specific institutional changes or an entire wave of travelers, as I propose in this chapter.² With the influx of instructors, most of whom had been trained in Europe and had been exposed to avant-garde trends while there, it follows that they would expand on these ideas once back in Colombia. The vast majority of instructors at the Escuela de Bellas Artes were Colombian, though trained in Europe. There were, however, some European instructors including Italian sculptors César Sighinolfi (1833-1902) and Luigi Ramelli, and Spanish painters Luís de

¹ “se introducen algunas de las tendencias del arte europeo.” Marta Fajardo de Rueda, *Presencia de los maestros 1886-1960* (Bogotá: El Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional, 1986), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 2-4, discusses Santa María’s work and his role as Director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes as a sort of modernist revolution in Colombian art.

Llanos and Enrique Recio y Gil (1860-1910).³ The Academy as a whole, then, and not just Santa María, deserves additional attention in this regard.

Two major publications--Fajardo de Rueda's book, *Presencia de los maestros 1886-1960* and *147 Maestros: exposición conmemorativa: 120 años Escuela de Artes Plásticas*--discuss the history of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. Neither, however, are comprehensive and are particularly sketchy in their descriptions of the institution's early years. This chapter contributes to the limited literature on the subject by establishing the important role that the educators of the Escuela de Bellas Artes played in the dissemination of European influences. These influences took place through the curriculum of the Escuela de Bellas Artes as well as more generally through mentoring relationships and art collections.

In order to fully understand the impact of the changes at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, one must first consider the political and economic landscape of Colombia during the early twentieth century. After the Thousand Days War (1899-1902) and before the violent uprisings of the 1940s, Colombia benefited from a stabilizing political situation and an economic boom, brought about by an increase in agricultural exports, primarily of coffee. From 1903 to 1930, Colombia experienced, according to historian David Bushnell, "the longest period of internal political stability of its independent history."⁴ These more favorable conditions, in comparison to those of the late nineteenth century, permitted Colombia to grow and modernize as a country, allowing certain institutions like

³ Ibid., 17, provides a list of all the directors and professors of the Escuela de Bellas Artes from 1886 to 1960, which has allowed me to detect the larger presence of foreign-trained Colombian artists.

⁴ David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 155.

the Escuela de Bellas Artes to benefit from more funding opportunities and a greater access to supplies, scholarships, and professors.

Politics played an important role at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, as well as in the careers of these artists. Cano, for example, was appointed as professor of painting, in large part due to his friendship with Carlos E. Restrepo, who at the time was president of Colombia. In a letter dated March 29, 1911, Cano, who had been living in Medellín and felt alienated from the artistic happenings that were occurring in Bogotá, expressed to Restrepo his desire to join the faculty of the Escuela de Bellas Artes.⁵ One year later, in a June 11, 1912 correspondence from the Academy, Acevedo Bernal's retirement as a painting professor was announced along with Cano's appointment to that same position.⁶ It seems reasonable that Acevedo Bernal's retirement was related to Cano's promotion, although Acevedo Bernal was promoted to director that same year. Even Cano's trip to Paris, which had been sanctioned by the Colombian government, had been made possible thanks to Restrepo.

Despite these political appointments, scholar William Alfonso López has suggested that the Escuela de Bellas Artes remained politically neutral largely as a result of Urdaneta's efforts in creating an educational space separate from the political discourse of his earlier publication, *El Mochuelo*.⁷ This is true to a certain extent, but political pressure should not be underestimated, especially in terms of faculty appointments. One

⁵ Francisco A. Cano, Medellín, to Carlos E. Restrepo, Bogotá, March 29, 1911, transcript in the hand of Francisco A. Cano, Archives of Carlos E. Restrepo, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín.

⁶ Ministerio de Instrucción Pública, Bogotá, to Ricardo Acevedo Bernal, Bogotá, June 11, 1912, transcript in printed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

⁷ William Alfonso López, "La fundación de la Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Visuales de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia y la institucionalización del campo artístico: primeras hipótesis," in *147 Maestros: exposición conmemorativa: 120 años Escuela de Artes Plásticas*, ed. David Lozano (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2007), 17.

of the greatest consequences of these political associations were their moral repercussions, which greatly impacted the content of Garay's work, as well as the reception of Santa María's. However, even if artists were openly allied with political parties, as in the case of Garay and Cano, and even if the criticisms they received were often politically biased, their careers at the Escuela de Bellas Artes remained intimately tied to an artistic, and not political, mission.

The artists of this study—Urdaneta, Garay, Santa María, Acevedo Bernal, and Cano—were among the earliest and most influential educators and directors of Bogotá's Escuela de Bellas Artes. Although all were involved in the establishments of various institutions in cities like Medellín and Cartagena, this investigation focuses on the Escuela de Bellas Artes as the most important art institution at the time. This chapter, informed by my research at the Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá, explores the influence each artist had, not only on individual students but on their overall legacy. Although these artists instituted many changes at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, I focus on the most significant ones, as well as on those that most closely relate to their overseas experiences as a way to demonstrate the source of these outside influences and the means by which they were disseminated, not only through painting, but also through practice.

Expansion of the Art Curriculum:

The Introduction of the Live Model

In Bogotá, education at early art institutions, such as the Colegio San Bartolomé and Academia Gutiérrez, had traditionally been limited to religious art and portraiture. Although the Escuela de Bellas Artes expanded upon this art instruction, it was not until the arrival of certain influential educators and administrators like Garay, Santa María, Acevedo Bernal, and Cano, that the artistic curriculum was overhauled. Creating a more diversified and well-rounded arts program, which included a stronger emphasis on figure study, landscape painting, printing techniques, and the decorative arts, these artists advanced the thematic and stylistic potentials of art. With the arrival of these travelers to Colombia, the Escuela de Bellas Artes finally excelled in its attempt to professionalize and in turn, modernize its students.

Major changes to the curriculum of the Escuela de Bellas Artes began even before the start of the twentieth century. The first major one took place under the directorship of Garay, a position he held intermittently from 1893 to 1899. During this time, Garay introduced the use of live models into painting and sculpture classes, an act for which there is no precedent in the history of Colombian art education. Though Colombia had resisted such a study, it had become an accepted aspect of academic art practice both in Europe and the United States. Eduardo Serrano has mentioned how “sporadically the theme of the nude in Colombia had been practiced.”⁸ However, he has also noted how it

⁸ “esporádicamente se había tratado antes el desnudo en Colombia.” Eduardo Serrano, *Andrés de Santa María: pintor colombiano de resonancia universal* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1988), 62.

was “thanks to the intervention of Santa María that the theme was able to be worked in absolute liberty.”⁹ Although Santa María re-introduced this tradition in the early twentieth century, Garay was the first to put it into practice, at a time when it was considered even more shocking and controversial.

The fact that scholars have overlooked this fact demonstrates, first, the extent to which the history of nineteenth-century Colombian art remains spotty, and second, the extent to which scholars have relegated Garay to the category of traditional painter. There are many stylistic and thematic incongruities in Garay’s later work, as evidenced in *Woman of the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains* (1899) and *Portrait of Carlos Valenzuela* (1900), which counter this argument. Although Garay’s decision to exhibit a nude, as he did in 1899, as well as the introduction of this practice at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, five years earlier, might be interpreted as an “Academic” gesture on his part; in Colombia, these two acts were considered bold moves. Not surprisingly and as demonstrated in the previous chapter, Garay’s canvas was the subject of contentious debates in Bogotá, as was his use of live models at the Escuela de Bellas Artes.

Upon his return from Paris and Rome, Santiago Gutiérrez also instituted the tradition of drawing and painting from the female nude in his home country of Mexico. In 1868, Santiago Gutiérrez established a studio in Mexico City with the support of José Salomé Piña, with whom he had traveled around Europe. Together Santiago Gutiérrez and Salomé Piña, outside the orthodoxy of the Academia de San Carlos, introduced the subject of the female nude in a country as conservative as Colombia, where “it was prohibited for women to pose without clothes,” and where “only in special circumstances

⁹ “gracias a la intervención de Santa María que el tema puede trabajarse con absoluta libertad.”
Ibid.

could the woman have her arms uncovered and her skirt above her ankles.”¹⁰ Even the representation of a woman’s ankles and arms was considered controversial, demonstrating the extent to which religious as well as political conservatism in both Mexico and Colombia inhibited many of these changes.

In Colombia, the first mention of drawing from the live model appears in a letter dated January 26, 1890, in which Garay mentions to Pedro Carlos Manrique, a colleague at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, that in order for him to return to Bogotá from Panama City the Colombian government “should also pay for the cost of models and set apart a small sum of money to reward distinguished students.”¹¹ Even before joining the faculty of the Escuela de Bellas Artes and after his return from Paris, Garay understood the importance of live modeling, as well as the importance of establishing an awards system. As a result of Garay’s artistic standing and Parisian pedigree, the artist felt entitled to make demands, not only for himself, but also for his students.

The second mention of this tradition appears in an unpublished letter from the Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, dated April 4, 1894. Written by Liberio Zerda, the president of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, this letter was directed to Garay, then director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. Since the Escuela de Bellas Artes belonged, and still does, to the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Zerda would have been considered Garay’s superior, therefore making the threatening tone of this letter all the more alarming for the director of the Academy.

¹⁰ “estaba prohibido que la mujer posase sin vestidos...solo en casos especiales podía tener desnudos los brazos y la falda arriba del tobillo.” *Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez: pasión y destino* (Toluco: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1993), 62.

¹¹ “pagar los gastos de modelos y destinar una pequeña suma para recompensar a los alumnos que se distinguen.” Epifanio Garay, Panama, to Pedro Carlos Manrique, Bogotá, January 26, 1890, transcript in the hand of Epifanio Garay, Private Collection; available from http://juliomanrique.com/abuelos/5_EPIFANIO_GARAY.html

This letter that touches upon the “immorality” and “unlawfulness” of having live models at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, reads:

In numerous occasions, I have notified you... verbally, that the use of models taken from women in the flesh is prohibited in this school, and for the classes on Painting and Sculpture, because this practice goes against the morals and customs of our society. Nevertheless, the bills for these models have continued to be submitted, and from this moment on, I advise you that this Ministry will not recognize services of that nature.¹²

In this statement, Zerda not only expresses his discontent in having to remind the director again of these moral standards, but also warns him against the potential penalties of going against this rule. Despite the didactic reasons for utilizing a nude model, as well as the long established tradition of this practice in Europe, Zerda’s letter focuses on the perceived indecency of this act as well as on the need for the Escuela de Bellas Artes to uphold these moral values, reflecting the conservatism of Colombian society. This letter also serves as an important reminder of how the religious and political conservatism of Colombia, especially during the Regeneración (1886-1899), not only influenced the careers of artists, but also major institutional changes.

Another letter, written by Pantaleón Mendoza, which requests the need of certain supplies, including gesso models, antique sculpture, and “a stove to heat the live model,” also alludes to this practice.¹³ Although this letter is undated, it is stored at the Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, where it is grouped with the correspondences dated before

¹² “En repetidas ocasiones ha hecho presente a Ud. El infrascrito Ministro, verbalmente, que no conviene el uso de modelos tomados de mujeres al natural en esa Escuela, para las clases de Pintura y Escultura, por que eso pugna contra la moral y las costumbres de nuestra sociedad. Sin embargo, se han seguido pasando cuentas por salarios de dichos modelos, y desde ahora aviso a Ud. que en adelante no se reconocieran en este Ministerio servicios de esta naturaleza.” Liberio Zerda, Bogotá, to Rector de la Escuela de Bellas Artes, Bogotá, April 1, 1894, transcript in the hand of Liberio Zerda, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

¹³ “una estufa para calentar el modelo vivo.” Pantaleón Mendoza, Bogotá, transcript in the hand of Pantaleón Mendoza, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

1899, suggesting that this mention of a stove, traditionally used to heat the models, did in fact correspond with Garay's implementation of this practice in 1894. Since Mendoza was named professor of painting when the Escuela de Bellas Artes was established in 1886 and since he served the institution throughout the remainder of the century, this then further proves an important point consistently overlooked by art historical scholarship: the existence of a nude modeling tradition during Garay's tenure.

Conservative art critic Jacinto Albarracín also disapproved of the incorporation of female models into the painting and sculpture classes at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in the late nineteenth century. According to Albarracín, "the classes with nude models...[were] scandalous in the puritanical society of the capital city," demonstrating, yet again, how controversial the theme of the female nude was in painting, as well as in the flesh.¹⁴ Especially in the case of female models, more so than male ones, this practice was a concern not only in Bogotá, but in Paris, where until 1863, according to Susan Waller, "for reasons of propriety and ideology, only male models posed nude in the École des Beaux-Arts."¹⁵ As a result, it is not surprising that Albarracín and Zerda would react this way, especially when considering the context in which these comments were made; during the Regeneración, when even the faintest reference to impropriety and the smallest deviation from Catholic values was considered intolerable.

The threats made by Zerda and the criticisms published by Albarracín, combined with the polemics surrounding Garay's nude painting, marked the end of live modeling at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, until the arrival of a more adventurous and independent

¹⁴ "las clases con modelos desnudos...escandalosas en la puritana sociedad capitalina." Jacinto Albarracín, *Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes de 1899: los artistas y sus críticos* (Bogotá: Imprenta de Medardo Rivas, 1899), 5-6.

¹⁵ Susan Waller, *The Invention of the Model: Artists and Models in Paris 1830-1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 1.

artist, Santa María. In Garay's career, the year 1899 not only signaled the end of his directorship, but was also the last time he exhibited a painting of a female nude. For an artist who depended on the support of a government that failed to see the pedagogical value of this practice, insisting too much on this subject proved to be detrimental to his career. Despite Garay's failure to permanently institute this practice at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, his attempts were groundbreaking considering the circumstances.

In 1904, and exactly ten years after Garay's first efforts, the incorporation of live models into the art curriculum of the Escuela de Bellas Artes was finally tolerated, if not considered necessary. Although I have been unable to confirm the initiation of this practice by Santa María in archival sources, some primary sources, such as Santa María's contemporary biographer, André de Ridder, have interpreted the changes he initiated at the Escuela de Bellas Artes as a reflection of the "ideas and methods taken from his experiences at European schools and studios."¹⁶ Although Ridder does not mention the use of live models in particular, he does refer to European methods of art education, which would have undoubtedly included this practice.

In 1945, the year of Santa María's death, Colombian critic Max Grillo commented on the re-initiation of this defiant act in the magazine *Revista de América*, in which he explained the process by which Santa María formally petitioned the President of the Republic, Rafael Reyes (1849-1921), to study the human body from the nude. Grillo wrote:

¹⁶ "ideas y métodos tomados de sus frecuentes estadías en colegios y talleres europeos." André de Ridder, *Andrés de Santa María* (Brussels: Editions de la Bascule, 1937), 83, in *Andrés de Santa María: nuevos testimonios, nueva visión* (Bogotá: Banco de la Republica, 1989).

Reyes received the students [of Santa María] in the presidential palace and when they explained, in front of the timid minister, the reason for their visit, the President called his eldest daughter [Sofía], a great admirer of the art of painting. Reyes addressed the students' petition by saying: 'Sofía should decide the matter.' Before the perplexed students and the embarrassed minister, the daughter of the President declared that in all of the painting academies of the world one studied from the nude human body.¹⁷

Sofía's response reflected that which Santa María and Garay believed to be true, that any serious and professional art academy needed live models in order to be on par with "the painting academies of the world." After this exchange, nude models were no longer considered distasteful or immoral, like they had been during the Regeneración; rather they were seen as necessary to the development of the Escuela de Bellas Artes.

This final implementation of the live model had a profound effect on the Escuela de Bellas Artes, as well as on the development of other art academies in the country, including the Instituto de Bellas Artes in Medellín, which was established in 1910. This new provision aided the professionalism of art students in Colombia, as well as expanded their creative potential. Without this change to the curriculum, the Escuela de Bellas Artes would have continued with the antiquated practice of drawing from prints, casts, and copies. The historical significance of this tradition can be measured by the long existence of this practice at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, which after its reintroduction by Santa María in 1904, continues to this day.

¹⁷ "Reyes recibió a los estudiantes en su palacio y cuando ellos le expusieron, delante del ministro pudoroso, el motivo de su visita, limitose a llamar a su hija mayor, aficionada al arte de la pintura. Reyes resolvió la petición de los estudiantes diciendo: 'Que Sofía venga a decidir el asunto.' Antes los estudiantes perplejos y el azorado ministro, la señora hija del presidente declaro que en todas las academias de pintura del mundo se estudiaba el desnudo del cuerpo humano." Max Grillo, "Andrés de Santa María Insigne Pintor," *Revista de América* 3, no. 7 (July 1945): 66.

Expansion of the Art Curriculum:

The Development of Printmaking

Although certain printmaking techniques, like lithography, had been in existence prior to the establishment of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, it was not until Parisian-trained artists returned to Colombia with their new knowledge in this area that more advanced forms of printing were introduced into the country. Historical treatments of printmaking in Colombia have focused almost exclusively on regional variations, making an overall assessment of the development of the medium difficult.¹⁸ Although historian Frédéric Martínez highlighted the connection between Urdaneta's pioneering efforts with *Los Andes* and his time spent in Europe, Martínez's discussion, as a historian and not an art historian, lacks visual analysis.¹⁹ In focusing on the contributions made by Urdaneta, Manrique, and Cano, I demonstrate how these Parisian experiences were integral to these advancements and in turn, how their role as educators permitted the dissemination of these practices.

Urdaneta was one of the earliest and strongest proponents of the graphic arts in Colombia. This is evident not only in his numerous publications such as *El Agricultor* (1868-1869), *El Mochuelo* (1877), *Los Andes* (1878), and *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* (1881-1888), but in the establishment in 1881 of the Escuela del Grabado and in 1886 of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Bogotá with its curricular emphasis on wood engravings.

¹⁸ Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo, *Historia del grabado en Colombia* (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1960); and Santiago Londoño Vélez, *Historia de la pintura y el grabado en Antioquia* (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 1996).

¹⁹ Frédéric Martínez, *El nacionalismo cosmopolita: la referencia europea en la construcción nacional en Colombia 1845-1900* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 2001).

Together with *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* these institutions propelled the growth of graphic design, which had, until then, been largely dormant. Urdaneta championed the art of printmaking in Colombia both through his positions as director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes and founder of *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*, considered to be “the best artistic publication of the last century and perhaps not surpassed to this day.”²⁰

This magazine, which was intimately tied to the Escuela de Bellas Artes, encouraged the participation of many art students, such as Ricardo Moros Urbina, who had originally trained as a painter, but who after enrolling in wood engraving classes under Antonio Rodríguez, became a regular illustrator for *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*. In addition to attracting artists, this publication also inspired others, such as Alfredo Greñas (1857-1949), to establish other printmaking studios in Bogotá, such as the Taller de Dibujo y Grabado. Eventually the techniques of printmaking spread throughout the distant provinces and regions of Colombia, reaching art studios outside the major cities of Bogotá and Medellín.

One of the regions that became interested in establishing its own illustrated press, as demonstrated in an August 10, 1912 letter, was the Department of Cauca. In this letter, the governor of Cauca urged the Escuela de Bellas Artes to help him set up a printmaking studio in its capital city, Popayán.²¹ Perhaps especially in the most remote areas of Colombia, the printed press was seen as a valuable resource, for it not only introduced an arts program to the region, but served the purposes of those who were interested in reaching a wider audience. Even after Urdaneta’s death in 1887 and that of his

²⁰ “la mejor publicación artística del siglo pasado y quizás no superada hasta hoy.” Antonio Cacia Prada, *Historia del periodismo en Colombia* (Bogotá: 1968), 177.

²¹ Ministerio de Instrucción Pública, Bogotá, to Rector de la Escuela de Bellas Artes, Bogotá, August 10, 1912, transcript in printed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

publication *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* in 1888, his legacy lived on in the work of his students, as well as in the lives of Manrique and Cano who ensured the continuing growth of the illustrated press in Colombia and particularly in Bogotá and Medellín.

Papel Periódico Ilustrado also inspired political caricaturists. The irony of this is demonstrated by Beatriz González who argues that “the pacifist project to which Urdaneta committed himself, after he abandoned the war of arms and pen, would become the nest for caricaturists who towards the end of the century would harshly criticize his political allies.”²² Also somewhat perplexing is that *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* inspired politicized publications such as *El Mago* (1891-1892) and *José Mefistófeles* (1897-1905), organized respectively by José Ariosto de Prieto and Darío Gaitán, former pupils of Urdaneta. Even though Urdaneta distanced himself from politics after the publication of *El Mochuelo* in 1877 and his imprisonment that same year, his legacy endures this political edge.

Another artist who taught printmaking at the Escuela de Bellas Artes and whose contributions to printmaking were influential was Manrique. After returning from Paris in 1886, Manrique established the first photogravure studio in Colombia (Fig. 5). While the wood engravings that Urdaneta introduced allowed for the combination of both text and image on the same page, the photogravure that Manrique used was a more advanced technology that created prints of better pictorial quality with more precise tonal values. The photogravure process utilizes ultraviolet light to transfer an image to a transparency,

²² “el proyecto pacifista al que se entregó una vez abandonó la guerra de lanza y lápiz, fuera la cuna de los caricaturistas que al finalizar el siglo fustigarían a sus copartidarios.” Beatriz González, “La historia de caricatura,” *Revista Credencial Historia* 10 (October 1990) [journal online]; available from <http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/revistas/credencial/octubre1990/octubre1.htm>.

which the artist uses to etch onto a copper plate for printing. Manrique's use of this process earned him a medal of honor in Ecuador at the Exposición Nacional of 1909.

Manrique's landmark publication, *Revista Ilustrada* (1898-1899), which incorporated this new technique, was also revolutionary in terms of content. While *Revista Ilustrada* served the journalistic purposes of recording the turbulent events of the Thousand Days War (1899-1902), it also played an important role in the dissemination of the most recent ideas in science, the arts, and politics. In fact, Manrique not only considered this magazine a social and political tool, but a modern one as well, that according to scholar Jorge H. Cadavid, reflected Manrique's ambitious desire of creating "a space where 'modern currents' circulate," and where "science and art rub shoulders with the latest trends in fashion."²³ Manrique's vision, as well as his printmaking process for this publication was far more advanced than Urdaneta's, demonstrating the speed at which the Colombian press was developing and becoming more modern.

The contributions of both Manrique and Urdaneta in the advancement of Colombia's graphic arts are illustrated in a mural painted by Luis Alberto Acuña (1904-1994) at the Museo de Artes Gráficas de la Imprenta Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá (Fig. 86). Acuña's mural includes Urdaneta, shown in profile at the bottom right corner, and Manrique, at the top left corner, positioned as the first in a long line of graphic artists. With this composition, then, Acuña refers to the innovations of these two men and demonstrates how their efforts served as important stepping-stones for later successors.

²³ "un espacio donde circularan 'vientos modernos' ... la ciencia y el arte se codean con los últimos gritos de la moda." Jorge H. Cadavid, "Revista Ilustrada (1898-1899): de la Ilustración al Modernismo," *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico* 31, no. 36 (1994) [journal online]; available from <http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/revistas/credencial/octubre1990/octubre1.htm>

Outside the walls of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Cano exerted influence through his own publication and in his native region of Antioquia. Although Cano's *Lectura y Arte* (1903-1906) lasted only three years with a total of twelve issues, it was the first publication in Medellín dedicated to the arts.²⁴ Maintaining some of the traditionalist trademarks of Urdaneta's *Papel Periódico Ilustrado*, such as the vignette-like layouts and a similar distribution of content, *Lectura y Arte* also furthered the modernist aesthetics of Manrique's *Revista Ilustrada*. Among the most distinguishing characteristics of *Lectura y Arte* was its use of color, as well as its bold covers and unusual typography. In the late nineteenth century, magazines such as *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* and *Revista Ilustrada* were monochromatic, but this changed in the early twentieth century when color, often used inventively, began to appear in publications. One particular issue of *Lectura y Arte* (Fig. 44) represents one of the earliest use of bold colors. This, combined with the magazine's iconic font, and Art Nouveau aesthetics seen in the woman's long flowing skirt and flattened picture plane, immediately made this publication stand out as being modern.

After the end of *Lectura y Arte* in 1906, Cano continued developing the graphic arts, both within and outside of Medellín. In 1912, he moved to Bogotá, where he served as director of the Litografía Nacional. In addition to heading this institution, he also taught printmaking, drawing, anatomy, perspective, painting, and sculpture at the Escuela de Bellas Artes. While a teacher, Cano continued the practice of drawing from the live model, which his predecessors and fellow travelers had introduced earlier. Additionally, he actively participated in the Instituto de Bellas Artes de Medellín, demonstrating how his influence stretched across regions and media more so than any other artist.

²⁴ María Cristina Arango de Tobón, *Publicaciones periódicas en Antioquia, 1814-1960* (Medellín: Universidad EAFIT, 2006), 206.

Expansion of the Art Curriculum:

Santa María and the Introduction of *En Plein Air* and Decorative Arts Classes

Among the artists who looked up to Santa María, Acevedo Bernal, who replaced him as director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1911, was one of his greatest admirers. In 1909, two years before Santa María's departure and while he was still acting director, Acevedo Bernal wrote a laudatory article, in which he praised Santa María as both an artist and educator. Acevedo Bernal noted:

At this time, Santa María has formed a group of disciples, whose works demonstrate the accomplishments that you can achieve when the master possesses ample art skills and when he is also enthusiastic and generous. In the School of Fine Arts he broke with the old and routine agenda, he initiated new procedures and, above all, he promulgated the law of individual freedom, fruitful in the formation of any true artist.²⁵

Acevedo Bernal's summary of Santa María's innovative approach to art based on "individual freedom" and creativity, and on his accomplishments as director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, demonstrates the prestige that Santa María held among fellow, progressive artists, and most likely his influence on Acevedo Bernal's future directorship (from 1911 to 1918). On the other hand, it was this very progressiveness that led to Santa María's denigration among the conservative critics and governing elite.

Santa María first served the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1894 as professor, but it was as director from 1904 to 1910, that the artist contributed the most to the Academy.

²⁵ "A esta hora Santa María ha formado un grupo de discípulos que con sus obras dicen muy alto hasta donde pueden llegar cuando el maestro posee ampliamente su arte y es además entusiasta y generoso. En la Escuela de Bellas Artes rompió los viejos rutinarios moldes, implanto nuevos procedimientos y ante todo promulgo la ley de libertad única fecunda para formación de verdaderos artistas." Ricardo Acevedo Bernal, "Don Andrés de Santa María," *Colombia Artística* (October 17, 1909): n.p.

Although Santa María is not often remembered as a landscape painter, and indeed, he was more of a portraitist, he did exert a considerable influence over Colombian landscapists. Santa María believed that sketching and painting outdoors, a tradition known in French as *en plein air* (meaning “in the open air”), was crucial to capturing the effects of natural light. At the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Santa María introduced some of the earliest classes on natural landscape painting, by which he meant *en plein air* classes, as well as classes with nude models.²⁶ The practice of *en plein air* was not only common among the Impressionists in France, but was also “compulsory for landscape students [of the École], and from 1817 on it became standard practice for all landscapists. It was an extremely widespread, popular, and notably visible practice.”²⁷ While in Paris the practice of sketching outdoors had become common by 1817, in Bogotá, it had not.

Santa María also introduced the idea of *l’art pour l’art* (“art for art’s sake”), a term coined in the late nineteenth century by French writer Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), who put forth the idea that art did not have to be morally or intellectually uplifting, the way it had traditionally been; rather, it could just be art, based simply on its physical characteristics. Santa María introduced this modern concept at the Exposición de la Fiesta de la Instrucción Pública of 1904 in Bogotá, where some critics such as Baldomero Sanín Cano, interpreted his Impressionist canvases as a reflection of this idea. Enamored by the lack of realism and surface texture of Santa María’s work, Sanín Cano wrote:

It is about time that painting was just simply painting. It has been so many things! They had used it to teach us. They had submitted it to strange

²⁶ Carolina Ponce de León and Jorge Gómez y Cáceres, “Cronología Comparada,” in *Andrés de Santa María: nuevos testimonios, nueva visión*, 47.

²⁷ Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique and the Painting of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 6.

tortures so that it represented philosophical systems or complicated theological concepts.²⁸

In celebrating the fact that a painting could just be a painting and that it did not need to be illusionistic, or for that matter, intellectual, Santa María, like Valenzuela in his *Portrait of Helena Carrizosa de Valenzuela* (Fig. 49), exhibited in Bogotá in 1910, debased the traditional foundation on which it lay; namely, that a painting is a window into reality. This radical shift in approach anticipated the work of future abstract painters.

In pursuit of change, Santa María also turned to the Escuela de Bellas Artes. In addition to integrating the women and men's art schools, he added the Escuela Profesional de Artes Decorativas e Industriales to the school. With its classes on silverwork, ceramics, woodwork, and stonework—traditionally reserved for apprenticeships and family trades--Santa María reinforced the artisanal dimension of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, perhaps even going against the original mission of the institution to convert artisans into fine artists. This particular vision, which paralleled Art Nouveau's integration of the arts and would later be developed to the extreme in Germany at the Bauhaus (1919-1933), signaled a cultural shift at the Escuela de Bellas Artes towards a more egalitarian and comprehensive art education.

Many critics, particularly those of the publication *Colombia Artística*, attacked Santa María's radical new approach to the fine arts, responding with accusations, at times completely false, over his incapacity to properly manage the school. One critic, Camilo Jiménez, described him as:

²⁸ "Era tiempo de que la pintura fuese sencillamente la pintura. ¡Había sido tantas cosas! La habían usado para enseñarnos. La habían sometido a torturas extrañas para que representase sistemas filosóficos o enmarañadas concepciones teológicas." Baldomero Sanín Cano, "El Impresionismo en Bogotá," *Revista contemporánea* 1, no. 2 (November 1904): 150.

A director who is not interested in the team, who receives money for the reorganization of the school and the establishment of a ceramic class, yet the school is disorganized and the ceramic class has disappeared; who opens an exhibition when he needs to exhibit his work and lets his students know with little anticipation, so they don't even have enough time to execute one decent work for the exhibition; and finally he says that he doesn't think about anything except returning to Europe, and as a result the school means nothing to him.²⁹

These accusations do not seem reasonable and in fact they are too focused on Santa María's foreignness, the very trait that was touted by other critics and attractive to students and administrators, alike, of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. These types of accusations, which surfaced during the end of Santa María's tenure and coincided in Colombia with a change in government and the Exposición del Centenario of 1910 in Bogotá, helped facilitate Santa María's decision to return permanently to Europe.

The bold changes that Santa María initiated at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, as well as his radicalism in painting, reflect the artist's independent spirit and worldly personality, but perhaps more importantly, his lack of territorial allegiance. Although Santa María shared somewhat of a bond to Colombia, as evidenced by his trips to his native country and as seen in *The Gleaners* (1895), the fact that he lived most of his life in Europe demonstrates his affinity to the more progressive art environment there, particularly in the face of some of the harsher conservative criticism he received in Colombia. Because of his dual citizenship, Santa María had greater mobility and more alternatives available to him than did other Colombian artists of his generation. This freedom allowed him to more aggressively push for his ideas while suffering little or no significant consequences.

²⁹ "Un rector que no se interesa por el plantel, que recibe dinero para la reorganización de la escuela y la fundación de una clase de cerámica y la escuela anda desorganizada y la clase de cerámica desapareció; que abre una exposición cuando el tiene ya que exponer y avisa a sus discípulos cuando no tienen tiempo para hacer una obra digna de exponerla; y finalmente que dice que no piensa en otra cosa que en volverse para Europea, y que por lo tanto no le importa nada de la escuela." Camilo Jiménez, "Escuela de Bellas Artes," *Colombia Artística* 2, no. 13 & 14 (July 20, 1909): n.p.

Expansion of the Art Curriculum:

The Tradition of Copying Modern, Rather Than Ancient Masters

For Colombian artists at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, copying Old Master paintings from prints was an integral part of their art education. For those who traveled abroad, this practice was enriched by their ability to do so while in front of the actual work, as well as by the possibility of being introduced to new canvases that they otherwise would not have seen. The artists who went to Europe—particularly Garay, Cano and Santa María—set the precedent for copying examples of contemporary European painting, whether Academic or avant-garde. The reproduction of canvases painted by living artists signaled a shift away from tradition and towards modernism.

Cano believed that copying works should only be done as an educational tool for the artist and that it should, in no way, define the artist's profession. To Cano, as articulated in *Lectura y Arte*, to copy was to promote “deception” and “falseness,” though he did hold somewhat of a double standard in his admiration of Garay's reproduction of the Spanish painter José de Ribera's *The Burial of Christ* (1620).³⁰ Somewhat agog, Cano wrote, “seeing this copy is like seeing the original; it's almost as if it had been robbed from France.”³¹ Although it was standard practice for artists to copy these traditional and religious canvases, it was unusual for them to reproduce contemporary examples.

Yet Cano himself, despite his admonishments of the practice, copied the works of living artists. Though he claimed these copies were done to improve his technique his

³⁰ Francisco A. Cano, “Epifanio Garay,” *Lectura y Arte*, no. 4/5 (December 1903): 65-66.

³¹ “ver esta copia es ver el original; es casi un robo hecho al museo de Francia.” *Ibid.*, 66.

reproductions at times tended toward the erotic. One such example is *Copy of Charles Chaplin (1825-1891)* (1900, Fig. 87), which features a woman who is nude from the waist up in a relaxed pose with half-opened eyes. Chaplin was known for his tantalizing and, at times, sexually elicited depictions of women that frequently appeared on the covers of popular magazines such as *L'Illustration*.³² By naming the painting *Copy of Charles Chaplin (1825-1891)*, Cano presents this canvas as a faithful rendering of Chaplin's work while distancing himself from his chosen subject. In so doing, Cano utilizes the copy to present the female nude to the Colombian public.

As demonstrated in *The Gleaners* (1895, Fig. 41) and *The Tea* (1890, Fig. 60), Santa María was also inspired by contemporary French painting, and particularly by Realism, Impressionism, and Symbolism. In reinterpreting the work of Jean-François Millet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Fernand Khnopff, Santa María emphasized, like Cano, the idea that copying European painting was not necessarily restricted to examples from the Italian or Spanish Renaissance. Rather, it extended into contemporary painting and even embraced modern styles. These modern canvases presented a modern approach in painting that Colombian art students who could not travel abroad could emulate.

The Importance and Early Establishment of Art Collections

Though there were not many opportunities to view European art firsthand in Colombia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a few venues did exist for

³² The cover of *L'Illustration* (May 3, 1890) features a copy of Chaplin's canvas exhibited at the Salon of 1890, which is strikingly similar in likeness and pose to Cano's *Copy of Charles Chaplin (1825-1891)*, painted in 1900.

Colombian artists who were not able to journey outside their own country. The Museo Nacional de Colombia that was founded in 1823, for example, housed works both by Colombian artists as well as those from overseas. In Beatriz González's writings about the history of the collection of paintings at the National Museum, she mentions that "the European travelers of the nineteenth century were the first to register the existence of easel paintings in the collections of the National Museum."³³ González does not specify which paintings were introduced to the museum, or whether European travelers brought them to Colombia or if it had been Colombian travelers who had visited Europe. But the importance of this statement is that the introduction of works of fine art, in a museum until then dedicated solely to the preservation of scientific and historical artifacts, occurred as a result of the presence of either foreigners or foreign-trained artists. These travelers, familiar with the contents of European museums like the Louvre, replicated what they saw abroad at home, as they did in the case of the Museo Nacional de Colombia.

In addition to the museum, European works were often available for Colombian artists to view in private art collections. The collections of those who taught at the Escuela de Bellas Artes were particularly important to the students and were not only used as didactic tools, but reveal aspects of the owner's personality and artistic tastes. Urdaneta's personal collection, for example, was vast and included a variety of art works both from Europe and Latin America. His collection included copies of Old Master paintings, particularly from the Italian Renaissance, a number of photographs and prints of Europe's most notable monuments, "magnificent examples of French

³³ "los viajeros europeos del siglo XIX fueron los primeros en registrar la existencia de pinturas de caballete en las colecciones del Museo Nacional." Beatriz González, "Ciencia, historia y arte en la colección de pintura del Museo Nacional de Colombia," in *Colección de pintura, Museo Nacional de Colombia*, eds. Beatriz González and Cristina Lleras (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2004), 12.

Impressionism,”³⁴ and paintings by contemporary French artists, such as those by his Parisian mentor Paul Césaire Gariot. He also owned a collection of Simón Bolívar portraits and death masks, as well as medallions completed by French Romantic sculptor Pierre-Jean David D’Angers (1788-1856). In addition to these foreign examples, Urdaneta also had works by Latin American artists, such as Colombian José Manuel Groot (1800-1878) and Mexican Santiago Gutiérrez, including “many studies from the live model, among them a nude.”³⁵

In addition to his art works, Urdaneta had an extensive literary collection that included books on Greek mythology, almanacs, and pamphlets, some by the French illustrator Gustave Doré. In 1888, one visitor described Urdaneta’s collection as “a beautiful museum, a rich library... and above all a sanctuary of art.”³⁶ Based on this description as well as on the title of Urdaneta’s study, “El museo-taller de Alberto Urdaneta,” (“The Museum-Workshop of Alberto Urdaneta”) it seems that Urdaneta’s collection was a museum of sorts, and therefore I assume accessible to his students and perhaps even to the public. Ranging from high art to popular art, from literature to painting, Urdaneta’s collection speaks to his well-roundedness and open-minded approach to a variety of artists, styles, and mediums, though this variety is not always reflected in his work.

Urdaneta’s collection, amassed sometime between his first and last trip to France, from 1865 to 1881, meant that works of Impressionism as well as a nude were held in

³⁴ “muestras magnificas del impresionismo francés.” Guillermo Hernández de Alba, “Alberto Urdaneta, su vida y su obra,” *Revista de las Indias* 25, no.79 (July 1945): 52.

³⁵ “varios estudios del natural, entre ellos un desnudo.” Lázaro María Girón, *El museo-taller de Alberto Urdaneta: estudio descriptivo* (Bogotá: Imp. de vapor de Zalamea Hnos., 1888), 47.

³⁶ “un bello Museo, una rica Biblioteca... y especialmente, un Santuario del Arte.” *Ibid.*, 84.

Colombia even before Garay, Cano, Santa María, and Acevedo Bernal had returned from Paris. This information, often overlooked by scholars, demonstrates the extent to which a proper reassessment of Urdaneta's work is due. Urdaneta's trips to Paris, among the earliest trips to Europe made by a Colombian artist, also demonstrate how cultural importations from Europe were not only in the form of ideas, but in what was brought back from abroad.

The Creation of a Culture of Rewards

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Colombian government began to institute a system of competitions and rewards for the arts. Garay had mentioned the awards in his letter to Manrique dated January 26, 1890.³⁷ It is not clear that Garay, in his tenure as director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes was the one who had initiated this practice. Regardless, the institution of a rewards system coincided with the return of the Colombian artists of this study from Paris, and it served as an important reflection of how the arts were starting to be better appreciated in Colombia, and their artists better rewarded.

Numerous letters held in the archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, dating from 1910 to 1911, discuss the rewards. One letter from José Bauerod and Gabriel Cabral Madero dated November 13, 1911, petitioned Acevedo Bernal, as director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, to make note of the students that should receive awards at the end of the

³⁷ Epifanio Garay, Panama, to Pedro Carlos Manrique, Bogotá, January 26, 1890, transcript in the hand of Epifanio Garay, Private Collection; available from http://juliomanrique.com/abuelos/5_EPIFANIO_GARAY.html

year, mentioning that although these medals have “no material value,” they do carry “a great moral one.”³⁸ Although Acevedo Bernal was not the first to institute a culture of rewards, he did support one, and in fact did so in following with Santa María’s previous directorship.

This rewards system, which was officially established sometime between 1904 and 1910, when Santa María was director, was integral to the motivation of students at the Escuela de Bellas Artes. As Eduardo Serrano has explained:

the intention to offer economic stimulus to the young artists, who were initiating the arduous path of an artistic profession, was also reflective of the dynamism that the artist was bringing to the teaching center.³⁹

Since the profession of an artist was not yet fully established in Colombia, this meant that the Escuela de Bellas Artes needed to offer economic and moral support as a way of ensuring the enrollment of its student body, as well as cultivating their artistic creativity, free of financial worries.

Colombia had a model to follow in Paris in the *École des Beaux-Arts*, as well as at smaller art studios like the *Académie Julian* where a formal rewards system had been in place. Acevedo Bernal and Santa María would have witnessed firsthand the competitive nature and rewards culture of Paris; perhaps this provided Santa María with the impetus to initiate such a rewards system in Colombia, bolstering the mission of the Escuela de Bellas Artes: to professionalize artists. In a country that was not yet fully supportive of

³⁸ “ningún valor material...un gran valor moral.” José Bauerod and Gabriel Cabral Madero, Bogotá, to Ricardo Acevedo Bernal, Bogotá, November 13, 1911, transcript in printed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

³⁹ “la intención de ofrecer un estímulo económico a los jóvenes que se iniciaban en el arduo camino del arte como profesión, era también señal del dinamismo que el artista le estaba aportando al centro docente.” Serrano, 81.

the fine arts, this system proved integral to the survival of artists who, like Acevedo Bernal, did not benefit from political connections or wealthy parents.

The Emergence of Alternative Art Establishments

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, numerous art establishments were founded in Colombia as an alternative to the Escuela de Bellas Artes, and as an option for residents who lived outside the capital city. In Cartagena, for example, Garay established the Instituto Musical y de Bellas Artes sometime between 1885 and 1893. In Medellín, Cano helped found the Instituto de Bellas Artes in the artist's native region of Antioquia, in 1910. Through their roles as founding members, these artists inspired their students to continue the growth of alternative artistic venues. In addition to this influence, however, what really catapulted the growth of art establishments in Colombia was the need for more diverse and independent institutions, which during the early twentieth century gave way to Secessionist groups like the *neocostumbristas*, which was informed by both Spanish painting and culture and the opposing Bachué Indigenist muralist movement that championed the indigenous roots of Colombian people.

The Círculo de Bellas Artes, established in Bogotá in 1912, was one of the earliest of these attempts at an art institution. Unlike at some of the other independent arts institutions, the founders here aimed to return to the conservatism of the Regeneración era. Comprised of Domingo Moreno Otero, Eugenio Zerda, and Miguel Díaz Vargas (1886-1956), the Círculo de Bellas Artes was born out of the necessity for the aristocracy

to regain influence in the artistic field, which, in painting, meant a return to Spanish subjects, or using Alvaro Medina term, *la españolería*.⁴⁰ Although these artists were, like Garay, members of the conservative elite, their modernist style should not be understated; many of them replicated the Impressionist palette of Santa María, as well as studied abroad in Madrid. They also initiated the *neocostumbrismo* movement.

Though Medina refrains from acknowledging the international and modernist currents of the *Círculo de Bellas Artes*, largely because of its dependency on the conservative Colombian aristocracy, this group, nevertheless, represents a new progressive strain in Colombian painting in the pioneering *neocostumbrismo* style.

Eduardo Serrano maintains that:

the modernist fervor that Santa María had initiated... established certain anti-Academic attitudes in the history of Colombian art, which—although obscured by pictorial traditionalism—were nevertheless maintained in some of the works of this period...[before] preparing the path for posterior and more definitive ruptures.⁴¹

In this regard, one should interpret the work of these *neocostumbristas* as not only a preservation of the modernist vocabulary of their predecessors, but also as the foundation for the “more definitive ruptures” of the mid-twentieth century.⁴²

⁴⁰Alvaro Medina, *Procesos del arte en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1978), 145.

⁴¹ “el fervor modernista que se había iniciado con Santa María...puede establecerse cierta continuidad antiacadémica en nuestra historia del arte, la cual—aunque opacada por el tradicionalismo pictórico—de todas maneras palpita en algunas obras de esa época...preparando el camino para posteriores rompimientos más definitivos.” Eduardo Serrano, *Cien años de arte colombiano 1886-1986* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1985), 86.

⁴² In the case of Domingo Moreno Otero, for example, the influence of Santa María can be best appreciated in his landscapes of the Colombian savannah, which according to Marina González de Cala, in *Domingo Moreno Otero: memoria de una época* (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 2002), 49, anticipate a new path in the evolution of a national art form.

Another major change that took place in the early twentieth century was the establishment of the Centro de Bellas Artes, founded in 1920 by influential muralist Pedro Nel Gómez (1899-1984). Gómez, together with Luis Alberto Acuña and Romulo Roza (1899-1964), initiated the Bachué Indigenist movement of the 1930s. This movement, which went against *la españolería* of the previous decade, ushered in the beginning of muralism in Colombia, and in turn, “the orientation of art towards the exaltation of American [meaning indigenist] values.”⁴³ This transformation introduced a nationalist idiom that championed a modernist aesthetic informed primarily by Mexican Muralism.

Around this time, the first Salón de Artistas Colombianos was organized in 1931, providing students of the Escuela de Bellas Artes with an additional exhibition venue. More importantly, however, this exhibition, which was built upon the legacy of the Exposición de Bellas Artes of 1886, anticipated the 1940 establishment of the Salón Nacional de Artistas, which was integral to the diffusion of modern art trends in Colombia.⁴⁴ These alternative venues, whether as institutions or exhibition spaces, expanded the limits and opportunities available to artists, and, just as they had done in France, fostered the birth of modern art.

⁴³ “la de orientar el arte hacia la exaltación de los valores americanos.” Fajardo de Rueda, 4.

⁴⁴ Cristina Lleras Figueroa, “Introducción,” in *Marca registrada: Salón Nacional de Artistas: tradición y vanguardia en el arte colombiano*, ed. Cristina Lleras Figueroa (Bogotá: Planeta, 2006), 1-3.

The Continuation of the Tradition of Traveling Abroad

Perhaps the most important precedent set by the artists of this study was the tradition of traveling both abroad and domestically. Garay was one of the earliest “to express the necessity to establish a system of scholarships to attract young and talented artists from other regions in the country.”⁴⁵ Aware of the great distances and remote towns within Colombia, Garay, who had lived in Panama City and Cartagena, understood the importance of attracting emerging artists outside the major cities of Bogotá and Medellín. Although this problem was resolved through the establishment of local art academies by the early twentieth century, Colombian artists were starting to gain a more global perspective on art.

This shift in ideology is one of the earliest indications of how travels to Europe were accompanied by changes in the artists themselves as well as their works. As a result, their desire to travel to Bogotá was replaced with an attraction to European cities like Paris and Madrid. One example of this is illustrated in a telegraph sent on June 18, 1928, by Efraim Martínez (1898-1956), an artist from the small city of Popayán, to Roberto Pizano, director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes. In the message, Martínez asks Pizano for a scholarship to travel overseas “in order to study in various countries, visiting museums, [and] with a sufficient salary.”⁴⁶ Martínez, who briefly studied at the Escuela de Bellas Artes under Cano, would have been inspired by the overseas experiences of his professor.

⁴⁵ “en señalar la necesidad de establecer el sistema de becas para atraer a los jóvenes talentos de las demás regiones del país.” Fajardo de Rueda, 1-2.

⁴⁶ “para estudiar en varios países, visitando museos, con asignación suficiente.” Efraim Martínez, Popayán, to Roberto Pizano, Bogotá, June 18, 1928, transcript in printed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

And because he had traveled to Bogotá on scholarship, he would have needed to do the same to Europe.

During the 1920s, after the establishment of the *Círculo de Bellas Artes*, Colombian travelers demonstrated a newfound interest in Spain. This reflected a desire on their part to return to their Spanish roots and to travel to a place with a shared language. The result was an influx of Colombian travelers in Madrid, including Moreno Otero and Díaz Vargas, both of whom registered at the *Academia de San Fernando* in Madrid in 1921 and 1926, respectively.

This preference for Iberian travel was offset by another wave of Colombian visitors to Paris, who included Nel Gómez, Acuña, and Rozo. These artists' choice to not travel to Madrid demonstrates that the artistic importance, bohemian spirit, and travel legacy of Paris continued to attract Colombian artists into the first few decades of the twentieth century.

A handful of artists, such as Roberto Pizano (1896-1929), traveled to both cities, enrolling at the *Académie Julian* in Paris, like his mentor Acevedo Bernal.⁴⁷ Borrero Álvarez studied in Seville, Spain in 1895, before traveling to Paris, while Moros Urbina traveled in 1891 to Madrid, Spain, and Rome. Once in Europe, Colombian artists, including Acevedo Bernal, who also traveled to Italy, took full advantage of what was their first and perhaps only European trip.

At around this same time, in the 1920s, Colombian government officials issued a number of decrees designed to ensure the continuation of travel to Europe and other places outside Colombia. Decree No. 568, instituted on March 28, 1928, is an example of

⁴⁷ *Roberto Pizano* (Bogotá: Seguros Bolívar, 2001): 135-137.

such a mandate, in which the requirements and privileges of traveling abroad are mentioned, as well as the eligibility of old and new professors and students of the school.⁴⁸ Although these ordinances encouraged artistic pilgrimages, they also ensured students would be affiliated with the Escuela de Bellas Artes, demonstrating the extent to which the Academy remained at the heart of art education in Colombia. While the government clearly supported these artistic pilgrimages, one must keep in mind that it was the directors and professors of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, among them Santa María, Acevedo Bernal, and Cano, who were behind these initiatives.

Even in the early twentieth century, and despite the country's relative economic stability, artistic pilgrimages were still plagued by a lack of funding. On June 21, 1928, while Nel Gómez was in Italy, Gonzalo Restrepo Jaramillo, a renowned politician from the region of Antioquia, asked José Vicente Huertas, the Minister of National Education, to provide Nel Gómez with financial assistance. He states:

unfortunately, Gómez is in a state of maximum poverty and if he is not helped, he will have to return to the country, leaving incomplete his studies, since the little help that he receives from the Society of Medellín will be taken away considering the circumstances in which the institution finds itself.”⁴⁹

With additional financial support, Gómez remained in Italy; recalling what had happened to Cano twenty-nine years earlier.

⁴⁸ Decree No. 568, Bogotá, June 18, 1928, transcript in printed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

⁴⁹ “desgraciadamente, Gómez esta en estado de pobreza máxima y tendrá que regresar al país, dejando incompletos sus estudios si no se le ayuda, pues el pequeño auxilio que recibía de la Sociedad de Medellín va a serle retirado por imposibilidad en que esa institución se encuentra.” Gonzalo Restrepo Jaramillo, Bogotá, to José Vicente Huertas, Bogotá, June 21, 1928, transcript in printed format, Archives of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

Another artist, Eladio Vélez (1897-1967), provided for by a scholarship from the Colombian government was able to travel to Rome and Paris, where he enrolled, like his predecessors, at the Académie Julian.⁵⁰ In fact, when Vélez settled in Paris in 1929, he became Tobón Mejía's studio assistant, again demonstrating the extent to which Colombian artists, especially from the region of Antioquia, gravitated toward each other in Paris.⁵¹

In working with the government to create more scholarships and in encouraging their students at the Escuela de Bellas Artes to partake in artistic pilgrimages, the first generation of Colombian travelers to France ensured the continuation of this tradition for the next group of artists, whose degrees of radicalism and tolerance for modernism were even more pronounced. An examination of the relationships between these artists' educational experiences in Paris and their pedagogical roles in Bogotá, as well as artistic correspondences between specific French paintings and some Colombian canvases, demonstrate the impact the European experiences had on these artists. Conversely, it also illustrates the extent to which Colombian artists of the nineteenth century had been largely disconnected from outside influences which, in turn, made them perhaps more receptive to them once they had the opportunity. It was not until the early twentieth century, when artists begin to be more selective in their assimilation of European prototypes that the cultural context of painting changes entirely. In keeping with contemporaneous modernist trends throughout Latin America, twentieth-century

⁵⁰ According to Miguel Escobar Calle, "Eladio Vélez, Cronología," in *Paisaje, Frutas, Retrato: Eladio Vélez, 1897-1967*, ed. Alberto Sierra Maya (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 2002), 43, Vélez registered at the Académie Julian and Académie Colarossi after April 1929. For an extended discussion on Pedro Nel Gómez's five-year stay in Europe, see Jesús Gaviria G., *Pedro Nel Gómez, los años Europeos* (Medellín: Universidad EAFIT, 1999).

⁵¹ Jorge Cárdenas, *Vida y obra de Marco Tobón Mejía* (Medellín: Museo de Antioquia, 1987), 77.

Colombian artists began to shift away from internationalism and move towards individualism.

Conclusion

“Insularity,” critic Eugenio Barney Cabrera once said, “had been the principal characteristic of the fine arts in Colombia.”¹ It is with this statement that Barney Cabrera opened his survey on Colombian art, titled *Geografía del arte en Colombia* (1965), in which he explained how in the absence of a defined school, Colombian artists “were influenced by sporadic and individual trips, occasional lectures, or, with greater frequency, by poets and intellectuals who frequented the spaces of their studios. For this

¹ “La insularidad...ha sido la característica principal de las artes plásticas en Colombia.” Eugenio Barney Cabrera, *Geografía del arte en Colombia* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1965; reprint, Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2005), 9 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

reason, it is not possible to find a national school.”² Although Barney Cabrera’s statement presupposes that Colombian art lacked cohesion as a result of all these disparate influences, he undermines the central role of the Escuela de Bellas Artes, and within that institution, the coming together of the “sporadic” Colombian artists and teachers who traveled to Europe. Moreover, Barney Cabrera disregards the impact the artist-teachers who visited Europe, especially Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, and Santa María, had on Colombian art through their importation of European influences.

Perhaps the greatest reason that Barney Cabrera and other scholars have failed to appreciate fully the impact these early travelers, and consequently, the Escuela de Bellas Artes, had on Colombian art is because of these artists dependency on the supposed classical model of art education. Beatriz González described their artistic pilgrimages to Europe as an “Academic” experience and continuation of their classical pedagogy, hinting at the traditionalist and conservative importations of these travelers.³ In a similar vein, Juan Camilo Escobar Villegas defined Cano’s trip to Paris as an opportunity for the artist to reaffirm his position as a “classical” painter who was oblivious to the artistic events of the city, such as the Exposition Universelle of 1899.⁴ Although it is true that Cano did not attend the Exposition Universelle of 1899, previous scholars have missed that he did attend the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts of 1898.⁵

² ““las influencias las recibieron ya de los esporádicos e individuales viajes, ya de ocasionales lecturas, o con mayor frecuencia, en virtud de las influencias ejercidas por poetas e intelectuales que circulan en las reducidas órbitas de cada taller. Por esta razón no es posible encontrar una escuela nacional.” Ibid.

³ Beatriz González, *El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 2004), 105-109.

⁴ Juan Camilo Escobar Villegas, ed., *Francisco Antonio Cano 1865-1935* (Medellín: Museo de Antioquia, 2003), 58.

⁵ Francisco A. Cano, *Apuntes de Viaje: Medellín, Paris 1897-1899*, ed. Dario Jaramillo Agudelo (Bogotá: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2004): np.

As this investigation has demonstrated, the works of Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, and Santa María were not “traditionalist.” In fact, their cultural importations were innovative, and even when their works seemingly remained somewhat unchanged, as was the case with Garay, this revealed a choice that can be placed within the socio-historical context. Such contextual analyses are largely absent in the scholarship on these artists, resulting in derogatory analyses of their works, such as those crafted by the scholars mentioned above.

One reason that scholars have largely misunderstood the works of these nineteenth-century Colombian artists is because the emulation of these European influences in Colombian painting and art education was a complex process of assimilation. In some ways it was a contradictory development. Santa María, for instance, absorbed the subjects and brushwork of the Impressionists, and in his later works, chose complete abstraction. Others, and most notably, Garay, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal, integrated these outside influences into their works somewhat cautiously, preserving a sense of traditionalism in painting, as seen in each artist’s reliance on line and volume while at the same time incorporating such European-based innovations as the female nude or the use of painterly aesthetics.

In their role as educators, Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, and Santa María challenged the traditionalism that initially was taught at the Escuela de Bellas Artes by integrating the decorative arts with the fine arts, and by initiating unorthodox practices, such as drawing from the live model and the tradition of *en plein air* sketching. At the same time, however, they also preserved certain traditions, like the practice of drawing from classical prints and casts. When exhibiting their own work, they carefully managed the works they chose.

During the late nineteenth century, when conservatism prevailed in both the political and religious sense, and when artists had few financial and institutional resources at their disposal, Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, and Acevedo Bernal, had no other option but to astutely negotiate these imposing cultural forces with the more liberal currents of Paris. For those who were pensioned artists, such as Garay and Cano, they had to be more careful in their stylistic and thematic choices, and also think twice about how far they were willing to push for pedagogical change. Although Acevedo Bernal did not receive government funding, he was limited by his own precarious financial situation.

Santa María and Tobón Mejía were the only two of the group of Colombian artists of this study to settle permanently in Paris. Free from financial limitations and government scholarship, Santa María and Tobón Mejía absorbed more so than their Colombian counterparts, modern styles of painting, such as Symbolism, with little or no consequence to their artistic careers. The majority of Colombian artists in Paris however, were not expatriates like Santa María and Tobón Mejía, but rather visitors like Urdaneta, Garay, Cano and Acevedo Bernal; and although the contributions made by these artists were not quite as radical or groundbreaking as those of Santa María and Tobón Mejía, they were revolutionary enough to cause a stir in Bogotá. More importantly, their contributions were progressive, not necessarily through content, but as a result of the circumstances in which these artists were able to achieve them.

The cultural negotiations in which these artists had to engage reflected a great deal about the society in which these artists operated, as well as revealed the conservatism and isolationism of art production in Colombia. This investigation, which has explored in greater depth the types of influences these artists absorbed abroad, and their consequent impact on Colombian art, has also discussed issues of reception. The shock with which

certain canvases were received, such as *Woman from the Levite from the Ephraim Mountains*, and the bewilderment created by certain novelties like Impressionism, demonstrate how these travelers were important promoters of international exchange. Initially, the public, critics, and visitors in Colombia—approaching the art works with a religious and political conservatism—resisted the work of these artists.

Although these insular views on art were eventually remedied, they did help facilitate the departure of certain influential artists from Colombia, most notably, Santa María, who returned permanently to Europe in 1911. It is likely that in addition to Tobón Mejía there were others from Colombia who sought refuge in Europe. The cost of insularity is best appreciated in the careers of Santa María and Tobón Mejía, whose presence, as much as their absence, left an impressive mark on Colombian art. Based on the distinct characteristic of insularity that plagued Colombian art during the late nineteenth century, internationalism has served as the central premise of this investigation.

Without appreciating the impact the transatlantic voyages of Urdaneta, Garay, Cano, Acevedo Bernal, and Santa María had on Colombian art, one cannot fully understand the extent to which an isolated society impaired the development of modern art in the country. Even if the artistic influences imported from abroad were not always radically modern, the importance of their trips was not so much in the types of examples that they brought over, but rather in the practice itself of exposure and foreign travel. What was most important about these artists' exposure to European art and its subsequent importation into Colombia was the hybridity in Colombian traditionalism and the innovation of European trends that resulted. The precedents the artists of this study set for the next generation of Colombian artists set in motion the arrival of modernism in the

country. A slow and gradual process, it was not until the 1950s when artists such as Alejandro Obregón (1920-1992), Enrique Grau (1920-2004), Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar (1923-2004), Fernando Botero (b. 1932), and Édgar Negret (b. 1920) became key players in the Latin American art scene, that Colombian art truly came into its own.

Table 1
Colombian Artists in Paris from 1865 to 1910

Artists	Dates	Arrival in Paris	Residential Address in Paris	Education in Paris	Funding for Trip	Exhibitions in Paris
Alberto Urdaneta	1845-1887	1865 and 1877-1881 (according to many scholars including Pilar Moreno de Angel, <i>Alberto Urdaneta</i> , 61-66)	56 rue de Rocher	Paul Césaire Gariot (according to H.W. Janson, <i>Catalogues of the Paris Salon, 1673-1881</i> , vol. 59, 11)	Personal	Salon des Artistes Français of 1880, no. 106 (<i>Portrait of Don Gonzalo Ximénez de Quesada</i>)
Epifanio Garay	1849-1903	(1874 New York), 1882-1886	3 Boulevard St. Michel	Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered under William-Adolphe Bouguereau from 1882 to 1884)	Government	Salon des Artistes Français of 1886, no. 1002 (<i>Recreation</i>) and Académie Julian exhibitions from 1882-1884
José Eugenio Montoya	1860-1922	c. 1891 (according to Rafael Pombo, "El pintor antioqueño," <i>El Siglo</i> (May 1897): n.p., and Beatriz González, <i>El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX</i> , 106)			Government	
Pedro Carlos Manrique	1860-1927	1882-1886		Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered under Bouguereau from 1882 to 1886)		

Andrés de Santa María	1860-1945	1862-1893 Paris, London and Brussels, 1901-1904 Paris, 1911-1945 Paris, London, and Brussels	16 rue Pierre-Charron (from 1902-1920), 16 avenue Pierre-1er de Serbie (in 1921), 14 rue Georges-Ville (in 1923)	École des Beaux-Arts (according to the Archives de l'École des Beaux-Arts)	Personal	Salon des Artistes Français of 1887, no. 2129 (<i>Seine Laundresses</i>), Salon des Artistes Français of 1889, no. 2407 (<i>Shooting Soldiers</i>), Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts (SNBA) of 1902, no. 1041 (<i>Portrait of a Child on Horseback</i>), SNBA of 1903, no. 1166 (<i>The Dragons of the English Guard</i>), SNBA of 1905, no. 1095 & 1096 (<i>Portrait of Mrs. S.M. & The Baby's Bath</i>), SNBA of 1907, no. 1058 (<i>Portrait of Children</i>), SNBA of 1909, no. 1042 (<i>Woman and Child</i>), SNBA of 1913, no. 1122 (<i>Portrait of a Child</i>), SNBA of 1914, no. 1074 (<i>Return from the Market</i>), Galerie M.M. Bernheim Jeune 1917, SNBA of 1920, no. 912 (<i>Head of a Woman</i>), SNBA of 1921, no. 1001 (<i>Descent of the Cross</i>), Salon de la Société Royale des Beaux-Arts in Bruxelles 1922, SNBA of 1923, no. 1276 (<i>The Annunciation</i>)
Pablo Rocha	1863-1937	1880s or 90's (according to Beatriz González and Cristina Lleras, <i>Colección de pintura, Museo Nacional de Colombia</i> , 80)		Académie Julian		
Francisco A. Cano	1865-1935	1897-1899	63 rue Monsieur le Prince	Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered under Jean Paul Laurens and Benjamin Constant from July 11, 1898 to Jan. 11, 1899 and again from January 30 to February 6, 1899) and Académie Colarossi	Government (Law 116 of 1896)	

Ricardo Moros Urbina	1865-1942	1891-1897 France, Spain and Italy (according to Beatriz González and Cristina Lleras, <i>Colección de pintura, Museo Nacional de Colombia</i> , 81)				
Ricardo Acevedo Bernal	1867-1930	(1890-1898 New York), 1903-1910 France, Italy, and Spain	235 Faubourg St. Honore	Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered under Tony Robert Fleury and Jules Lefebvre from October 23, 1905 to April 23, 1906)	Personal	
Federico Rodríguez	1871-1941	1880s or 90's (according to Beatriz González, <i>El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX</i> , 106)				
Jesús María Zamora	1871-1948	1892-1893 Europe (according to Marta Fajardo de Rueda, <i>Jesús María Zamora: discípulo de la naturaleza (1871-1948)</i> , 199)				
Ricardo Moros Urbina	1865-1943	1891-1897 France, Spain and Italy (according to Beatriz González and Cristina Lleras, <i>Colección de pintura, Museo Nacional de Colombia</i> , 81)				

Salvador Moreno	1874-1940	(early 1890s Mexico) 1894-1896	8 rue Vivienne	Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered under Fleury and Lefebvre from April 13 to October 14, 1894 and again from October 28, 1895 to October 26, 1896)	Government (Law 116 of 1896)	Académie Julian exhibitions from 1894-1896 and Salon of 1899 (according to L.N., "Salón de Paris," La Crónica, September 7, 1899)
Luis María Gaviria		1896-1897	31 Boulevard St.Michel	Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered at the studio from November 30 1896 to January 25, 1897)	Government (Law 116 of 1896)	
Domingo Bolívar		1899-1900	8 rue Leonce Reynaud	Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered at the studio from June 5, 1899 to February 11, 1900)		
Wenceslao de la Guardia		c. 1899				Salon of 1899 (according to L.N., "Salón de Paris," La Crónica, September 7, 1899)
Julian Rubiano	1875-1922	1880s or 90's (according to Beatriz González, <i>El arte colombiano en el siglo XIX</i> , 106)			Government	
Marco Tobón Mejía	1876-1933	(1906-1908 Cuba), 1909-1933 France	117 rue Notre Dame des Champs	Académie Julian (according to the Archives de l'Académie Julian, he registered at the studio from November 1908 to February 1909)		Salon des Artistes Français of 1930, no. 3885 (<i>Painful Solitude</i>)

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