

EXPRESSIONISM *FROM* LATIN AMERICA: ANTECEDENTS AND NEW HISTORIOGRAPHIC PROPOSALS

EXPRESIONISMO *DESDE* AMÉRICA LATINA: ANTECEDENTES Y NUEVAS PROPUESTAS HISTORIOGRÁFICAS

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Abstract

Considering expressionism as a cultural phenomenon of international scope, we present the milestones in its historiographic approach in Latin America. The different stages of thought are reviewed, describing the proposals of some of its most significant representatives and emphasizing the conceptual changes in terms of the conception of temporal axes, the materiality of artistic discourses and their relationship with the spaces and cultural contexts in which they are produced. In particular, we identify the possibilities offered by conceptual proposals from the beginning of the twentieth century to the current notion of «simultaneous vanguards», which enables their productive activation in both modernity and postmodernity. This contribution seeks to make the Latin American contribution to transnational expressionism visible and to recover the productions that have been excluded from the debates, placing their protagonists in a scenario of international appreciation and recognition.

Keywords

Expressionism; painting; 20th century; Latin America; time; artistic object; nomenclature; networks

Resumen

Partiendo del expresionismo como un fenómeno cultural de alcance internacional, se presentan los hitos en su abordaje historiográfico en América Latina. Se recorren las distintas etapas del pensamiento, describiendo las propuestas de algunos de sus representantes más significativos y enfatizando los cambios conceptuales en

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términos de la concepción de los ejes temporales, la materialidad de los discursos artísticos y su relación con los espacios y contextos culturales en los que se producen. En particular, se identifican las posibilidades que brindan las propuestas conceptuales desde inicios del siglo veinte hasta llegar a la noción actual de «vanguardias simultáneas», que habilita su activación productiva tanto en la modernidad como en la postmodernidad. Mediante este aporte se busca visibilizar la contribución latinoamericana al expresionismo transnacional y recuperar las producciones que han quedado al margen de los debates, ubicando a sus protagonistas en un escenario de valoración y reconocimiento internacional.

Palabras clave

Expresionismo; pintura; siglo XX; América Latina; tiempo; objeto artístico; nomenclatura; redes

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BACKGROUND

Even if expressionism is widely recognized as a current of international modernism, until very recently, the assumptions that tended to present it as a specifically German contribution to modern art have only recently been refuted or reformulated. It is only with the publication of *The Routledge Companion to Expressionism in a Transnational Context*² that expressionism begins to be considered as «a form of artistic practice and cultural encounter contextually situated within but geographically unbounded by European art and culture of the twentieth century»³. In this new perspective, the transnational formation, dissemination, and transformation of expressionism is addressed through the forms of community and collective identity-making that have stimulated artistic practice and communication in Europe and beyond. Artists' networks and exchanges are then taken as a basis for cultural interaction, artistic cooperation and intellectual exchange, influencing modern and contemporary cultural productions⁴.

Within the framework of the current historiographic discussions⁵, this approach to the expressionist practice «opens up new perspectives to discourses on developments in the visual arts of the first half of the twentieth century and challenges the traditional narratives that have predominantly focused on artistic styles and national movements»⁶. When considering the migratory temporalities⁷, this view breaks with modernity's conception of linear and standardized time, opening up the possibility for expressionism to acquire a different significance in the artistic and cultural contexts outside the German-speaking world. In this sense, it aligns itself with the heterochronic conception of time which questions the vision of subordinate histories as repetitions or regressions of the dominant ones⁸. It also recovers the phenomenological presence of the work of art, broadening the temporal horizon of its aesthetic power⁹ and reformulating the importance of the place of production as one of its axes of meaning¹⁰.

In Latin America, progress has been made in the analysis of the types of connections that enabled and determined the appropriation of expressionist principles and values¹¹, as well as the definition of its plastic characteristics¹² and its differentiation

2. Wünsche, Isabel (ed.): *The Routledge Companion to Expressionism in a Transnational Context*. New York, Routledge, 2019.

3. Wünsche, Isabel: «A conceptual introduction», in Wünsche, Isabel (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 1-30, p. 1.

4. Van Den Berg, Hubert: «Expressionism, Constructivism and the Transnationality of the Historical Avant-Garde», in Gluchowska, Lidia; Van Den Berg, Hubert (eds.): *Transnationality, Internationalism and Nationhood: European Avant-Garde in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*. Walpole, Peeters Publishers, 2013, pp. 23-42.

5. Hernández, Miguel Ángel: *El arte a contratiempo. Historia, obsolescencia, estéticas migratorias*. Madrid, Ediciones Akal, 2020, p. 25.

6. Wünsche, Isabel (ed): *op. cit.*, p. 1.

7. Hernández, Miguel Ángel: *op. cit.*, p. 111.

8. Moxey, Keith: *El tiempo de lo visual. La imagen en la historia*. Barcelona, Sans Soleil Ediciones, 2015.

9. *Idem*, p. 67.

10. *Idem*, p. 61.

11. Frick, María: «Expressionism in Latin America and Its Contribution to the Modernist Discourse», in Wünsche, Isabel (ed): *op. cit.*, pp. 507-524.

12. Frick, María: «Expresionismo del Sur: hacia la definición de un arte propio», *ILLAPA Mana Tukukuq*, 16 (2019), pp. 86-97.

from other concurrent modernist tendencies¹³. However, the identification of the support points that this view may hold in the historiographic narratives is still pending, that is: the recognition of the moments in which Latin American thought enables active participation in this transnational movement. Particularly, as has been stated in the framework of the project «Los estudios de arte desde América Latina: temas y problemas» («Art Studies from Latin America: issues and problems»)¹⁴, it is necessary to identify the different conceptions regarding the historiographic treatment of the temporal axes and, with them, the possibility of conceiving different temporalities which –anchored in the materiality of cultural discourses¹⁵– do not reflect an omni-explanatory temporality but rather indicate possible ways of interpretation¹⁶.

This requires that while denouncing the strongly repressive nature of the discipline¹⁷ or the erroneous literature emerging from museums and critics in Europe and the United States¹⁸, we also analyze the ways in which the art history of Latin America has defined itself¹⁹. This is a difficult task due to the ambiguities, contradictions and incongruities that still exist, not only regarding the term «Latin America»²⁰ but also about the vision of aesthetic discourse and artistic practice²¹. However, conceptual frameworks which somehow enable the analysis of the expressionist gravitation in Latin American art, have been developed. Thus, the greatest challenge lies in the articulation of such proposals, so as to recover the productions that have been left out from the debates and place its protagonists on what Andrea Giunta calls «a setting of international recognition and appreciation»²².

With that aim, this article presents some milestones in the address of expressionism at the several stages of Latin American thought which account for the treatment given to the topic. Later, it analyzes the possibilities offered by the new theoretical proposals in terms of the identification of the artists' contributions

13. Frick, María: «A half-hearted Expressionist extortion: representations of barbarism in Uruguay between 1920 and 1960», *RIHA Journal*, nº 0257 (2021). Online: <https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/rihajournal/issue/view/5285> [29/10/2021].

14. The project «Los estudios de arte desde América Latina» was coordinated by Dr. Rita Eder, former director of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas de Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México - UNAM. The minutes of the seminars held between 1996 and 2003 are available at: <http://www.esteticas.unam.mx/edartedal/index.html> [29/10/2021].

15. Lauer, Mirko: «El arte en la historia de América Latina como constructor de tiempo social», *Actas del seminario «Una nueva historia del arte en América Latina»*. Belaggio, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996, p. 4.

16. Escobar, Ticio: «La globalización y la diferencia», *Actas del seminario «Una nueva historia del arte en América Latina»*. Oaxaca, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996, p. 4.

17. Sánchez, Suset: «Cita a ciegas (Tarsila, Lam y Picasso): Interpelar las imágenes, decolonizar la historiografía, ficcionalizar la historia», unpublished, 2016, p. 1. Online: https://susetsanchez.wordpress.com/conferenciasponencias/2016_tarsila_lam [29/10/2021].

18. Amaral Aracy: «Projeto de trabalho: História da Arte Moderna na América Latina (1780-1990)», *Actas del seminario «Una nueva historia del arte en América Latina»*. Oaxaca, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996, p. 2.

19. Eder, Rita: «Los estudios de arte desde América Latina: temas y problemas», *Actas del seminario «Una nueva Historia del Arte en América Latina»*. Oaxaca, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996, p. 1.

20. Amaral, Aracy: *op. cit.*, p. 1.

21. Lauer, Mirko: *op. cit.*, p. 1.

22. Giunta, Andrea: «Comentarios sobre la reunión realizada en Oaxaca y propuestas para Belaggio», *Actas del seminario «Una nueva historia del arte en América Latina»*. Belaggio, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996, p. 3.

to this international movement. Finally, it presents some comments aimed at developing a new approach with the ultimate purpose of contributing to the transformation of the overarching and exclusionary paradigms which still prevail in the art history of the region.

THE FIRST APPROACHES

The first references to expressionism maybe traced to the vanguard magazines of the late 20s and early 30s, both through the reproduction of works and the spreading of different texts²³ and ideas²⁴. In general, these publications addressed general aspects of cultural life, from a stance in which art follows the development of society in history from a linear perspective²⁵, referring to the movement in the framework of the new art trends and not focusing on its potential specific manifestations in the painting of the region. But they also anticipated ideas which would later become proposals for the construction of an original Latin American art.

Such is the case of the *Manifesto Antropofágico*, published in 1928 by the poet Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954) in the *Revista de Antropofagia*²⁶. Initially developed to account for the appropriation of the European art trends, this paradigm of Brazilian modernism posited voluntarily swallowing the dominating culture to its own benefit, incorporating the conquers of the vanguards in the construction of a strategy of its own. Under this concept, expressionism was then understood, already in those years, as a poetics chosen by many painters to find the bases on which to establish the universality of the Brazilian land²⁷. Such is the case of migrant artists as Lasar Segall²⁸ (FIGURE 1), but also of local painters like Anita Malfatti, Emiliano de Cavalcanti, Livio Abramo, Carlos Sincliar or Marcelo Grassman, later on²⁹.

In those years there also existed a kind of conservative criticism which, mainly employing the press review format, tended to assess painting from a political, ethical and social point of view³⁰. An example of this is the article in which the Colombian journalist and conservative politician Laureleano Gómez takes a stand against the murals of Pedro Nel Gómez, claiming they were contrary to the classical principles of truth and beauty³¹.

23. Grosz, George: «El arte y la sociedad burguesa», *Amauta*, 1/1 (1926), pp. 25-28.

24. García, Carlos: «Huellas de Herwarth Walden en Hispanoamérica», *Cuadernos del Hipogrifo*, 13 (2020), pp. 54-66.

25. Lauer, Mirko: *op. cit.*, p. 1.

26. De Andrade, Oswald: «Manifiesto Antropófago», *Revista de Antropofagia*, 1/1 (1928), pp. 3-7.

27. Jiménez, Carlos: «Brasil de nuevo la antropofagia», *Art Nexus*, 3/40 (2001), pp. 76-83.

28. De Andrade, Mário: «Prefácio do catálogo da exposição promovida pelo Ministério da Educação», *Revista Acadêmica*, X/64 (1944), pp. 9-14.

29. *Expressionismo no Brasil: Heranças e Afinidades*, exh. cat. 18ª Bienal de São Paulo - O homem e a vida, 1985, p. 14.

30. Mallet, Brian: «La crítica del arte latinoamericano y la crítica de arte en América Latina: el dado cargado», *Historia Crítica*, 13 (1996), pp. 16-20.

31. Gómez, Laureano: «El expresionismo como síntoma de pereza e inhabilidad en el arte», *Revista Colombiana*, VIII/85 (1937), pp. 385-392.



FIGURE 1. LASAR SEGALL, *GADO NA MONTANHA (CATTLE ON THE MOUNTAIN)*, 1939, OIL WITH SAND ON CANVAS, 60 X 65 CM. Museu Lasar Segall-Ibram/Ministério do Turismo, São Paulo

Nevertheless, a new criticism was hatched in the academic environment which, although somewhat erratic and less than rigorous³², began to address the artistic act as a self-sufficient object, refraining from the philosophical judgments on the beautiful and the ugly³³. The historiographic proposal of Julio Payró (1899-1971), who contributed one of the few definitions that have been produced on the international expressionist movement, belongs to this stage.

Payró rejected the expansion of the term «expressionism», understanding its differences with the other modern movements, especially those which have occasionally been labelled as expressionist. He then referred to the authentic expressionism as objective expressionism. That is:

32. Serviddio, Fabiana: «La conformación de nuevas teorías sobre el arte latinoamericano en el proceso de crisis epistemológica de la modernidad», *PÓS*, 2/4 (2012), pp. 62-81.

33. Álvarez de Araya, Guadalupe: «Temas de la crítica: tratamientos del origen cultural, la identidad y la transculturación en la crítica de arte latinoamericana entre 1930 y 1975», *Figuraciones*, 10 (2012). Online: <http://repositorio.una.edu.ar/handle/56777/1107> [29/10/2021].

An art whose main feature consists in a distortion of reality –in shape, in color, or in both– destined to powerfully highlight those elements of reality which the painter especially wished the spectator to notice. It is nothing other, in painting, than the hyperbole of rhetoric. But, for a painting to be classified as expressionist, it is indispensable for such hyperbolic distortion not to go as far as to alter the forms so fundamentally that these become unrecognizable³⁴.

He does not, however, set forth the possibility of its international spreading. Payró eventually identifies some of his followers among champions of the Argentinean modern art³⁵ and even tries to establish parallel sequences with the European painters³⁶, but this line of analysis only starts to appear with the thinking of Jorge Romero Brest (1905-1989). From a perspective that shall only be revisited later, Romero Brest considered expressionism as a spiritual state susceptible of being applied to a great number of painters, which was exercised over the known shapes in accordance with the different local traditions³⁷.

In coincidence with the anthropophagic paradigm, he also asserted that –almost at the same time as it boomed in Germany– expressionism extended internationally in ever succeeding waves up to the late fifties, giving rise to an Austrian expressionism, a Spanish expressionism, a French expressionism, and a naïve and folklorist expressionism, which seeks its forms at the level of the adherence to the reality in which one lives. However, the critic did not deepen in the analysis of its possible manifestations in Latin American art, which would have to wait several years to be approached.

This interval in the line of analysis is due to the emergence of a marked concern for the identity of Latin American art, which would dominate the debates of the following decades³⁸. It is a key moment in which the interpretation models that extrapolated the schemes of European art history are rejected and a new type of history, which will have a strong impact on later thought, starts to develop. This process is described by Damián Bayón (1915-1995), who synthesized in his texts some of the assumptions that articulated the discussions, and, with them, the possibilities of addressing the expressionist trends in the art of the region.

From a linear and evolutionary perspective of history, Bayón understands that the styles respond to certain mental times and historical circumstances, and therefore must be understood in a chronological sense and not as recurring categories

34. Payró, Julio: *Héroes del color: vida, obra, teorías y gravitación de los maestros postimpresionistas fundadores del arte contemporáneo*. Buenos Aires, El Ateneo, 1951, p. 117. Own translation from Spanish. Original text: «Un arte cuya característica consiste en una deformación de lo real –en forma, en color o en ambas cosas– destinada a hacer resaltar con mucha fuerza aquellos elementos de la realidad que el pintor quiere hacer ver especialmente al espectador. No es otra cosa, en pintura, que la hipérbola de la retórica. Pero, para que un cuadro se clasifique dentro del expresionismo, es indispensable que aquella deformación hiperbólica que no llegue al extremo de alterar las formas tan fundamentalmente como para que éstas dejen de ser reconocibles».

35. Payró, Julio: *Veintidós pintores: facetas del arte argentino*. Buenos Aires, Poseidón, 1944.

36. Wechsler, Diana: «Julio Payró y la construcción de un panteón de «héroes» de la «pintura viviente»», *Actas del seminario «La teoría y la crítica de arte en América Latina»*. Buenos Aires, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999, p. 13.

37. Romero Brest, Jorge: *La pintura europea contemporánea (1900-1950)*. México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958, p. 75.

38. Bayón, Damián: *El artista latinoamericano y su identidad*. Caracas, Monte Ávila Editores, 1977, p. 26.

or spiritual states liable to be repeated throughout history³⁹. In this way, he states that, in terms of the styles of European origin, the relative delay and scarcity of masterpieces turns Latin America into a poor relation of Europe. And, simultaneously, that the use of the same nomenclatures by the Latin American criticism does nothing but refer us back to the time of an older and more civilized culture, thus suggesting some kind of submission. This is why, without abandoning the idea of history as a unitary process, he proposes the generation of a new reference system specific to the region. As he himself suggests:

«Expressionist», «fauve», do not mean the same as in the cultural context where these terms were generated. That is why I allowed myself to dissent with the authors who continue to apply this nomenclature as if they had the naïve hope of hooking the Latin American coach –even if it is the last one– onto the occidental train⁴⁰.

One of the direct consequences of this kind of approaches was thus the development of a Latin American discourse which tended to use its own terms and theoretical developments to resist and differentiate itself from the European art movements and influences. In some cases, however, this generated what Octavio Paz (1914-1998) described as a «rectification operation», which simplified the art expressions, depriving them of their historical and aesthetical ambiguity and, with it, their original wealth⁴¹. In particular, Paz pointed out that Mexican muralism was reduced to the linear development of a single idea, a single aesthetics and a single purpose, disassociating it from expressionism, it being an international movement, and especially affecting some artists.

This tendency was also accused of causing a neurotic feeling of dependence, a bastardy complex⁴², by which the region conceived itself only as a subsidiary of the contributions of other continents⁴³ and incapable of producing work that was up to the demands of occidental art⁴⁴. But it will not be until the revision of the traditional historiographic approaches and their reference systems that an unprejudiced self-awareness can be created; one which understands the visual proposals from the coexistence of elements taken from everyday life with others contributed by the languages of occidental art⁴⁵.

39. Bayón, Damián: «Hacia un nuevo enfoque del arte colonial sudamericano», *Anales del Instituto de Arte Latinoamericano e Investigaciones Estéticas*, 23 (1970), pp. 17-32.

40. Bayón, Damián: *Aventura plástica de Hispanoamérica: pintura, cinetismo, artes de la acción (1940-1972)*. México, Fondo de Cultura Universitaria, 1974, p. 120. Own translation from Spanish. Original text: «'Expresionista', 'fauve', no quieren decir lo mismo que en contexto cultural donde esos términos se originaron. Por eso me permití disentir con los autores que siguen empleando esa nomenclatura como si tuvieran la ingenua esperanza de enganchar el vagón latinoamericano –aunque sea el último– al tren occidental».

41. Paz, Octavio: «Ocultación y descubrimiento de Orozco», in Paz, Octavio: *México en la obra de Octavio Paz. Tomo III: Los privilegios de la vista*. México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987, pp. 285-319.

42. Zea, Leopoldo: «Latina América: largo viaje hacia sí misma», *El Correo de la UNESCO*, agosto-septiembre (1977), p. 6.

43. Vega, Gustavo: «¿Qué ha dado América Latina al mundo? Reflexiones en torno al Bicentenario», *Revista Archipiélago*, 17/65 (2010), pp. 8-10.

44. Sanjurjo, Annick: *El Paraguay en sus artes plásticas*. Washington, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, 1994, p. 6.

45. Pini, Ivonne: «Revisiones al manejo del tiempo histórico desde el arte», *Artes*, 6/3 (2003), pp. 64-78, p. 69.

A CRITICAL STAGE

In the 60s and 70s art criticism is professionalized, becoming a legitimate and differentiated space of cultural production. It is then that, still from a history based on a linear evolutionary time, the idea associating modernity with homogeneity and, with it, the notion of an international art language, is increasingly questioned. In this debate, besides, the critics abandon the exercise of an impartial aesthetic judgment and, drawing on phenomenological and neo-Marxist theoretical-methodological sources, subject the artwork to signification levels connected to the political and the social⁴⁶.

Among these approaches, it is worth mentioning that of Marta Traba (1930-1983), whose writings are still considered an essential component of the apodictic body of Latin American criticism, as well as of the discursive operations which codetermined, at a level of conception, production and reception, the visual arts of the better part of the 20th Century⁴⁷. Along her extensive production, Traba proposes an analysis which denounces the European vanguard trends inasmuch as a form of cultural domination that suffocates Latin American art, subsuming it to imitation mechanisms and unifying its products in a deceitfully homogeneous collection founded on the vision of a planetary culture⁴⁸.

It has been said, however, that her allusions to Europe and in fact ambivalent, oscillating between the respect she expresses for works, artists, theories and places of reference, and the desire for autonomy that lies in the center of her critical thought⁴⁹. It has also been suggested that her analysis has a biased side, in which she undertakes a posture of critic-judge which –with multiple contradictions and improvisations– blesses or excommunicates the artists on the basis of extra artistic criteria which clearly respond to a social and political commitment⁵⁰.

In the case of expressionism, these contradictions appear in the analysis she makes of the work of Andrés de Santa María, to whom she assigns an exceptional nature which isolates him both internationally and in terms of a possible local legacy, whether contemporary or intergenerational⁵¹. But the ambivalences also reveal themselves in her approach to Mexican muralism, which –after accusing it of producing an involution in art– she considers as the only movement that sets the bases of an artistic language that evades the passive transfer of the European model.

Even if Traba considers that the «isms» of the continent were individual trials of greater or lesser talent, she mentions the indebtedness incurred by the Mexican

46. Piñeiro, Gabriela: *Ruptura y continuidad. Crítica de arte desde América Latina*. Santiago de Chile, Ediciones Metales Pesados (Kindle Edition), 2019, p. 86.

47. Rincón, Carlos: «Revisión de Marta Traba: los comienzos», *Actas del seminario «La teoría y la crítica de arte en América Latina»*. Buenos Aires, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999, p. 2.

48. Serviddio, Fabiana: «La conformación de...», p. 67.

49. Crousier, Elsa: «De Europa a América: la obra crítica de Marta Traba y sus evoluciones», *Artelogie*, 5 (2020). Online: <https://journals.openedition.org/artelogie/4962> [29/10/2021].

50. Bayón, Damián: «El espléndido no conformismo de Marta Traba», *Sin Nombre: Revista Trimestral Literaria*, January-March (1984), pp. 89-96.

51. Traba, Marta: «Problemas de influencias, de universalismo y localismo, de técnicas y de significados en la obra de Andrés de Santamaría», in Traba, Marta: *Historia abierta del arte colombiano*. Bogotá, Colcultura, 1960, pp. 87-114.

muralists with the new European art, particularly Diego Rivera during his learning in Europe. She asserts, even, that both David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco and Dr. Atl (pseudonym of Gerardo Murillo) became indebted to the formal freedom generated by expressionism⁵². However, this connection with the international movement suddenly fades when she suggests that the muralist rupture with the postimpressionist landscape painting consisted mainly in the cubification of Cézanne. Unlike Octavio Paz, who builds a bridge between attachment and autonomy with respect to the international vanguards, she disregards the possibility that the muralists have recreated the vocabulary of expressionist forms to arrive at results which are diametrically opposed to these proposed by the European artists.

On the other hand, Traba includes in her legacy a great number of prominent painters of the most distant corners of the continent. Among them: Raquel Forner, Demetrio Urruchúa or Antonio Berni in Argentina; Cándido Portinari, Emiliano di Cavalcanti and Lasar Segall in Brazil; José Venturelli in Chile; Alipio Jaramillo, Ignacio Gómez Jaramillo and Pedro Nel Gómez in Colombia; Norberto Berdía in Uruguay; Gabriel Bracho in Venezuela; and, within the indigenist movement, Julia Codesido and Sérvulo Gutiérrez in Perú. But later she strictly circumscribes the influence of the movement to the period between 1920 and 1950, when many aesthetical ruptures –in the forms, the themes and the sources– coincided and eventually merged with concerns of social tenor. Traba considered that these artists, prone to exploiting the social, indigenous or *mestizo*, black or *mulatto* themes, availed themselves of the languages of the vanguards to disguise the real issues in favor of the political propaganda, not formulating original visual and interpretative codes that would allow for the construction of a space independent from the hegemonic cultural centers. She therefore categorizes their works as a kind of social art which loses most of the inquisitive and exploratory strength that would have allowed for the formulation of new languages and, in her characteristic tone, accuses artists like Antonio Berni of producing a minor realism, close to the mediocrity of the neighborhood municipal art (FIGURE 2).

In this case, her contradictions arise from her refusal to accept the possibility that the artists may make valuable and original proposals even within a prevailing hegemonic language⁵³. That is, as Andrade, Paz and Romero Brest had anticipated, art creation is a complex and contradictory process that employs different artistic languages and fragments of tradition as a function of a multiplicity of presents. In fact, she only refers to the impact of expressionism in connection to the artistic ideas and principles that will lead to the Modern Art Week in Sao Paulo and, in particular, to the work of Tarsila do Amaral, which she classifies as the most representative vanguard of the twofold –European and Latin American– dimension⁵⁴.

52. Traba, Marta: *Arte de América Latina: 1900-1980*. Washington, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, 1994, p.14.

53. Mosquera, Gerardo: «Arte desde América Latina. Identidad, globalización y dinámicas culturales», *Artishok, Revista de Arte Contemporáneo* (2019). Online: <https://artishockrevista.com/2019/12/04/arte-america-latina-gerardo-mosquera/> [29/10/2021].

54. Traba, Marta: *Arte de América Latina...*, p. 54.

But she but does not explain the background of such influence or delve into its possible connections with later movements, such as the expressionist-tachist abstraction derived from the Week of 22 or the symbolic figuration that takes place between 1950 and 1970.



FIGURE 2. ANTONIO BERNI, *EL OBRERO HERIDO* (*THE WOUNDED WORKMAN*), 1949, OIL ON CANVAS, 200 X 150 CM. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires

In general terms, structured on a linear time with exclusive extra-artistic categories, her conceptual framework prevents a general interpretation of Latin American art in its intricate complexity. Therefore, her approach is incapable of

apprehending more than fleetingly the possibility of an active participation in the international expressionist movement, subjecting the artists who eventually employed its language to an ambiguous, fickle and secondary position in the narratives regarding the art of the region.

THE COLD WAR DISRUPTION

Despite its ambiguities, some of Traba's theses supported the actions promoted by the Pan American Union - PAU (later the Organization of the American States - OAS), during the period in which its Visual Arts Section was headed by the Cuban critic José Gómez Sicre⁵⁵. In particular, Traba and Gómez Sicre shared the vision of upholding Latin American art on a par with international art; this was: «to offset the weight of Mexican muralism in Latin America in order to advocate instead an art not bound to nationalist protests and, therefore, capable of engaging in debate on purely visual questions»⁵⁶.

This position was framed in the Cold War and U.S. programs to counter sympathy for European fascism and, later, the Cuban Revolution⁵⁷. Aligned with the Pan-American strategy, PAU/OAS championed the international legitimation of Latin American art by affiliating to expressionist abstraction, doing away with regionalism and any hint of political narrative⁵⁸. This affected not only the conception of Latin American art in the United States but also but also in Latin America itself⁵⁹, fueling alternate genealogies of art history in opposition to hegemonic nationalist ones, supporting young artists that challenged the parameters of social realism and promoting an expansive circuit of «reception points» mainstreaming this vision of international modernism⁶⁰.

In this context, Traba and Gómez Sicre also promoted neo-figuration –mainly represented by Argentinean Neo-figuration, Mexican Interiorism, and Fernando Botero's *uglyist* period– as an art trend that projected a third path, alternative to both abstract formalism and social realism and to their respective models of civilization⁶¹. Whether because of personal preferences⁶² or as a reaction to the «Stalinization» of

55. Armato, Alessandro: «José Gómez Sicre y Marta Traba: historias paralelas», *Actas del Seminario Internacional «Synchronicity, contacts and divergences in Latin America and US Latino art»*. Austin, University of Texas at Austin, 2012, pp. 118-127.

56. Pini, Ivonne; Bernal, María Clara: «José Gómez Sicre and his Impact on the OAS' Visual Arts Unit: For an International Latin American Art», *Arteología*, 15 (2020), p. 6.

57. Piñeiro, Gabriela: *op. cit.*, p. 63.

58. Pini, Ivonne; Bernal, María Clara: *op. cit.*, p. 4.

59. *Idem*, p. 8.

60. Armato, Alessandro: «La 'primera piedra': José Gómez Sicre y la fundación de los museos interamericanos de arte moderno de Cartagena y Barranquilla», *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*, XII/24 (2012), pp. 381-404.

61. Armato, Alessandro: «Monstruos desde el sur. La construcción de la neofiguration como tendencia artística en Latinoamérica», *Tarea*, 2 (2015), pp. 188-199, p. 190.

62. Pini, Ivonne; Bernal, María Clara: *op. cit.*, p. 7.

the Latin American Left⁶³, they then endorsed the hemispheric rise of figuration as a center of gravity, with its own irreducible features, within universal figuration⁶⁴.

These efforts had their climax at the exhibit «Neo-figurative painting in Latin America: Oils»⁶⁵, which identified a new generation of «leading painters» that «in treating the human figure, envelop it in the uncertainty or despair which they find characteristic of our age»⁶⁶. This stance was further supported in the publication «Los cuatro monstruos cardinales» («The Four Cardinal Monsters»)⁶⁷, where Traba equated the work of Mexican José Luis Cuevas with those of Francis Bacon, Jean Dubuffet and Willem de Kooning in terms of his capacity to recover the individual in a horizon of almost uniform production of artworks.

At this point, Traba claims that the new figuration was the result of the conviction with which some individual personalities established themselves in their own projects, making use of the elements of the European vanguards in the formulation of a new symbolic language which incorporates its own cultural forms, economic situations and lifestyles⁶⁸. While she actually does not explain in what way the artists break up with the classic teacher-student relationship regarding their European peers, she argues that they promote an art capable of producing emotions through representations which –unlike the expressionist works of the beginning of the century– did not attempt to redress the human condition through images⁶⁹. In other words, that they are capable of reconceptualizing the ethical role of art transcending the civilizing mission of the muralists and their concern with certain social and historical processes⁷⁰.

In this way, Traba somehow recovers expressionism –which had been dissociated both from the roots of the abstract expressionism⁷¹ of the United States and the socialist realm of the Soviet Union⁷²– as a latent aesthetic attitude in Latin American art. And even if she does not overcome the monolithic conception of temporality, she also establishes a link with European neo-expressionism, which was then emerging as a counter-offensive to abstraction and as a search for a national cultural identity⁷³, qualifying her position regarding the double operation of exclusion/

63. Serviddio, Fabiana: *Arte y crítica en Latinoamérica durante los años setenta*. Buenos Aires, Ed. Miño y Dávila 2012, p. 204.

64. Armato, Alessandro: «Monstruos desde el sur...», p. 198.

65. «Neo-Figurative Painting in Latin America: Oils», exh. cat. Washington, Pan American Union, 1962.

66. McEwen, Abigail: «Pan-American Posterity: The Permanent Collection of the Art Museum of the Americas», in Ospina, Adriana (ed.): *Art of the Americas: Collection of the Art Museum of the Americas of the Organization of American States*. Washington, Art Museum of the Americas/Organization of American States, 2017, pp. 24-40, p. 25.

67. Traba, Marta: *Los cuatro monstruos cardinales*. México D. F., Ediciones ERA, S. A., 1965.

68. Traba, Marta: *Arte de América Latina...*, p. 86.

69. Oviedo Salazar, Mauricio: «La entrada de la neofiguración a Costa Rica por parte de 'los cuatro monstruos cardinales' de Marta Traba», *Artes-UNICACH*, 9 (2015), pp. 16-27, p. 17.

70. Fox, Claire: *Arte Panamericano. Políticas culturales y guerra fría*. Santiago de Chile, Ediciones Metales Pesados, 2016, p. 219.

71. Giunta, Andrea: «Crítica del arte y guerra fría en la América Latina de la revolución», *Actas del seminario «La teoría y la crítica de arte en América Latina»*. Buenos Aires, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999, p. 5.

72. Wünsche, Isabel: «Expressionist networks in the Russian empire, Soviet Russia, and the Soviet Union», in Wünsche, Isabel (ed): *op. cit.*, pp. 113-133, p. 128.

73. Behr, Shumalith: *Expresionismo*. Madrid, Tate Gallery/Encuentro Ediciones, 2000, p. 74.

confrontation which had characterized art criticism since the second postwar period⁷⁴.

This approach was not deepened in the following years, when the military dictatorships put a halt to the history of debates and exchanges between the cultural centers of the region⁷⁵. From the eighties onwards, the reflections on Latin American art adopted a vision oriented towards cultural studies, which definitely abandoned the analysis of the artworks based on styles and trends⁷⁶ in favor of their exhibition as a political and social phenomenon⁷⁷. Boosted by the boom of poststructuralist and postmodern ideas about appropriation, this vision emphasized the processes of resignification, transformation and syncretism from a postcolonial perspective, which insisted on the institution of a Latin American culture opposed to European and North American domination.

There exist only a few specific works that –although they do not stop to explain their origins– identify the existence of «a continental movement of young people, known as the New Figuration (or Neo-Humanism), which left aside social realism to generate a version of existential and critical painting inspired by Goya, German expressionism, Francis Bacon, Willem de Kooning, pop elements and the regional sources of their respective countries»⁷⁸. Renowned critics of the region then referred to neo-figuration in Paraguay⁷⁹ (Carlos Colombino, Olga Blinder, William Riquelme, Bernardo Krasniansky, Ricardo Migliorisi), Venezuela⁸⁰ (Ernesto León, Carlos Sosa, Carlos Zerpa), Argentina⁸¹ (Ana Eckell, Fernando Fazzolari, Eduardo Médici, Marcia Schwartz, Carolina Antoniadis, Guillermo Kuitca, Gustavo López Armentía, Duilio Pierrri, Enrique Burone, José Garófalo and Martín Reyna) and Mexico, where their search «with or without folklore, typicism or picturesqueness [...] is comparable to that of the New Savages or the German neo-expressionists»⁸². Their approach, however, still adhered to the idea of a linear and evolutionary time, in which there is a core that works as parameter or standard⁸³.

74. Piñeiro, Gabriela: *Ruptura y...*, p. 86.

75. Giunta, Andrea: «América Latina en disputa. Apuntes para una historiografía del arte latinoamericano», *Actas del seminario «Una nueva Historia del Arte en América Latina»*. Oaxaca, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996, p. 6.

76. Ise, María Laura: «Arte latinoamericano en los ochenta y los noventa: una mirada desde algunas exhibiciones y catálogos», *Nómadas*, 35 (2011), pp. 31-47, p. 37.

77. Mallet, Brian: *op. cit.*, p. 19.

78. Goldman, Shifra: «El espíritu Latinoamericano: la perspectiva desde los Estados Unidos», in Llanes, Lillian (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 89-95, p. 90.

79. Escobar, Ticio: «Arte actual de Paraguay», in Llanes, Lillian (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 180-186.

80. Figarella, Mariana: «Los años 80: panorama de una década», in Llanes, Lillian (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 185-195.

81. Glusberg, Jorge: «Los pintores de la generación del 80», in Llanes, Lillian (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 135-139.

82. Emerich, Luis Carlos: «Los años 80: una nueva figuración artística de México», in Llanes, Lillian (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 176-181.

83. Giunta, Andrea: *Contra el canon. El arte contemporáneo en un mundo sin centro*. Buenos Aires, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2020, p. 93.

OTHER READINGS

It is not until the mid-90s that narratives began to be questioned, emphasizing the transformation capacity of the cultural forces of local nature⁸⁴. There then occurred an epistemological break in terms of the dissolution of history as a unitary process and, consequently, of the possibility of a common identity to characterize the Latin American. Thus, the possibility of the mechanical and comparative transfer of processes that, even if chronologically may be parallel, respond to different cultural moments, was disrupted.

From this new angle, the European contents may not be transferred unmediated to the Latin American reality because –as duly held by Damián Bayón– «they do not have the same meaning as in the cultural context where they originated»⁸⁵. However, it is not a problem of nomenclatures or of the desire to participate in the occidental world, but of overcoming the unifying imaginaries of a modernity where there is little room for multiplicity. It is about incorporating the concept of hybrid culture, which intertwines heterogeneities⁸⁶ in a context *from* which the works are created, from a variety of subjects, experiences and cultures⁸⁷. From this new perspective, the originality of Latin American painting lies in the subjective modulation of the culture, the place and the subjectivities typical of the artists which is expressed in the different artistic objects.

Among these readings, it is worth mentioning that of Gerardo Mosquera (1945), who takes up the paradigm of anthropophagy as a key notion to address the cultural dynamics of the continent, underlining its potential to describe cultural appropriation as an attractive and characteristic procedure of all subordinate and post-colonial art⁸⁸. In general terms, Mosquera agrees with the view of thinkers such as Néstor García Canclini (1939) on the possibility that the appropriation of plastic findings from different trends and nations generates a «flexible cosmopolitanism that combines multiple aesthetic combinations in a multicultural heritage»⁸⁹. However, Mosquera emphasizes the conflict underlying this process, in which the recipients always select and reshape the elements they seize by assigning them a meaning according to their own cultural patterns⁹⁰.

In this sense, although it does not disrupt the understanding of the art of Latin America in terms of localized difference⁹¹, his proposal makes it possible to rethink the processes of appropriation, experimentation and symbolic vindication of the vanguard currents, as does Mosquera himself regarding Wilfredo Lam and the

84. Pini, Ivonne: *op. cit.*, p. 68.

85. Bayón, Damián: *Aventura plástica...*, p. 120. Own translation from Spanish. Original text: «no quieren decir lo mismo que en el contexto cultural donde se originaron».

86. Pini, Ivonne: *op. cit.*, p. 69.

87. Mosquera, Gerardo: «Arte desde América Latina...», No page.

88. Mosquera, Gerardo: «Contra el arte latinoamericano», *Actas del seminario «Una nueva Historia del Arte en América Latina»*. Oaxaca, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996, p. 5.

89. García Canclini, Néstor: «Culturas híbridas y estrategias comunicacionales», *Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporáneas*, Época II, III/5 (1997), pp. 109-128, p. 119.

90. Mosquera, Gerardo: «Contra el arte latinoamericano», p. 8.

91. Piñero, Gabriela: *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Cuban artists of the eighties⁹². Retrieving the existentialist perspective of critics such as Romero Brest⁹³, he highlights the power of artists to question the canons and reconstruct the central artistic currents⁹⁴, giving new emphasis to the identities that are manifested in artistic practice through the «employment of identifying elements taken from folklore, religion, the physical environment, or history»⁹⁵.

For the specific case of expressionism, this opens up the possibility of thinking of an identity which is no longer centered on a single space of reference or an anecdotal «Latin American nature», but on a particular use of semiotic resources in a logic of action determined by the singular historical conditions of inscription of the works⁹⁶. This is the case, among others, of Luis Felipe Noé's «expressionist brutalism» and his way of rethinking an aesthetics that «needs no passport», representative of a «different, deterritorialized and open conception of the cultural dynamics in which identities are defined», and from which the artist's paintings «rediscover» the Amazon, the historical battles, the first conqueror's gaze»⁹⁷.

By making the resignification process more complex, Mosquera also enables the questioning of the temporal constructions in force in the discipline. To the extent that cultural appropriation is considered an essentially active phenomenon, the possibility arises that the recipients modify the positions and meanings that the appropriated elements had in the original cultural system, initiating similar processes of originality to those made by the European modernism of African, Oceanic and Mesoamerican imagery⁹⁸. In this manner, not only is the materiality of artistic discourses recovered, but its temporal horizon of reception is broadened, revisiting the possibility of the «ever succeeding waves» described before by Romero Brest.

Although they did not give rise to specific theoretical developments, these possibilities took shape in the curatorial scripts of two key exhibitions. The first is «Expressionismo no Brasil: Heranças e Afinidades» («Expressionism in Brazil: Heritages and Affinities»)⁹⁹ which, with a selection of 348 works by 75 Brazilian artists born between 1884 and 1965, offered a glimpse of the decisive mark that this current of international modernism had on the formation and development of modern and contemporary art in Brazil. The second is «Lasar Segall: un expresionista brasileño» («Lasar Segall: a Brazilian expressionist»)¹⁰⁰, which addressed the impact of this painter –not on the theme or aesthetic-political program– but on the systematized practices, artistic procedures of a large number of artists of this country. As described by Ivo Mesquita (1951):

92. Mosquera, Gerardo: *Arte «desde» América Latina (y otros pulsos globales)*, Ediciones Cátedra, Madrid, 2020.

93. Serviddio, Fabiana: «La conformación de...», p. 139.

94. Piñeiro, Gabriela: *op. cit.*, p. 112.

95. Mosquera, Gerardo: «Contra el arte latinoamericano», p. 17.

96. Piñeiro, Gabriela: *op. cit.*, p. 14.

97. García Canclini, Néstor: «Redefiniciones: arte e identidad en la época de las culturas postnacionales», in Llanes, Lillian (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 53-61, p. 57.

98. Mosquera, Gerardo: «Contra el arte latinoamericano», p. 8.

99. *Expressionismo no Brasil: Heranças e Afinidades*, exh. cat. 18ª Bienal Internacional de São Paulo, 1985.

100. *Lasar Segall: un expresionista brasileño*, exh. cat. Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires / Museu Lasar Segall, Buenos Aires, 2002, pp. 233-239, p. 237.

In the 1980s, the emergence of a new generation of Brazilian artists served as a watershed in the country's art history, inaugurating a new era which coincided with the end of the military governments and the return to democratic freedoms and civil governments. Familiar with international trends such as the Italian Transvanguardia, the German Neo-Expressionism and the several styles that proposed a revision of history and tradition, a group of painters established, for the first time, a productive dialogue with Brazilian artists of previous generations [...] Thus, the painting of Segall is revisited by some artists, exploring his palette –the sweaty colors of Mangue, the earthy tones of the landscapes, the several shades of gray– and the materiality of his surfaces [...] These productions broaden the field of historical narrative, maintaining the reverberation of Segall's presence among us, in a network of superimposed times, a never-ending story¹⁰¹.

A NEW APPROACH

In the past few years, Andrea Giunta (1960) has developed an approach which systematizes and deepens the debates of previous decades, in which she was also an active participant. Like Mosquera, Giunta agrees with some of García Canclini's fundamental approaches, such as his proposal to analyze contemporary art movements through the metropolitan networks that build their hegemony «through the simultaneous processing of multiple cultures and aesthetics born and developed transnationally»¹⁰²; or his idea that art condenses the incessant displacements of heterogeneity and fragmentation, mixing and de-hierarchizing the different periods of art history¹⁰³. However, Giunta adheres to a model of time that goes «beyond interculturality and hybridity» to address a multiple temporality in which there are no completely rational correspondences¹⁰⁴ and where the works of art are penetrated by alternative temporalities «which either entangle, integrate or directly clash and produce conflicts»¹⁰⁵.

In fact, Giunta proposes a conceptual model that makes it possible to reformulate the traditional discourses on art from the recontextualization of previous artistic experiences¹⁰⁶. In this address, she highlights the simultaneity of the language and ideas produced in art since the second post-war, emphasizing the conceptualization of the artwork as a situated event. Without overlooking the relations with the European cultural centers, she proposes a new historical articulation in which the artists expand the potentialities of the European vanguards producing their own vanguard experiences from the founding fact of living in different cultural contexts. Thus, even if they share conceptual procedures and

101. Mesquita, Ivo: «Lasar Segall, un lugar en Brasil», in *Lasar Segall: un expresionista brasileño*, exh. cat. Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires / Museu Lasar Segall, Buenos Aires, 2002, pp. 233-239, p. 239.

102. García Canclini, Néstor: «Redefiniciones: arte...» p. 55.

103. *Idem*, p. 59.

104. Hernández, Miguel Ángel: *op. cit.*, p. 114.

105. *Idem*, p. 9.

106. Giunta, Andrea: *Contra el canon...*, p. 13.

strategies, these artistic experiences are conceived in extraordinarily differentiated manners, which are activated in the compaction of senses produced by each work.

Even if Giunta does not analyze the expressionist movement in particular, from her perspective it is possible to uphold that the value of Latin American productions lies initially in its contextual determinations, from which they make an original contribution to the occidental art scene. Such is the case of the artists of abstraction and neo-figuration, but also of the first generation of modern painters that drew on the expressionist principles and values to question the homogenizing models proposed in the frame of the consolidation processes of the Nation-states. Paradigmatic cases would be in this sense those of the representation of the war¹⁰⁷, when the artists portrayed the anonymous victims and soldiers as central figures of the historical narrative, or those of the rural landscape and the *gaucho*¹⁰⁸, which denounced the persistence of the primitive in the modernization and incipient industrialization projects. But her proposal also opens up other analysis dimensions which make it possible to overcome some of the limitations of the preceding historiographic perspectives.

Firstly, Giunta highlights the role of the networks of influence in the processes of strategic appropriation of visual or conceptual devices. In line with the studies that incorporate the transnational perspective in addressing the vanguards, this entails the consideration of the actors' networks which operate as exchange mechanisms that allow for the traffic of forms and the generation of creative activation networks. In other words, that it is possible to trace genealogies that –far from attributing paternities– align the interests through certain artistic procedures and languages beyond the possible temporary, political, geographical or cultural limits¹⁰⁹.

This provides the opportunity to, among other things, assume without contradictions the link of muralism with international expressionism or the connection between neo-figuration and the work of Francis Bacon or George Grosz. This is possible, for example, when visualizing the fact that an artist like Luis Felipe Noé trained with Horacio Butler, who was, in turn, part of the vanguard group connected to the *Martin Fierro* magazine and, during his time in Paris, attended the workshop of the Fauvist Othon Friesz. Similar cases are, among others, Grau's link with the School of Paris or Fernando de Szyszlo (FIGURE 3) being trained in the Art Academy of Lima, which inherited the expressionist branch inaugurated by Sérvulo Gutiérrez and Adolfo Winternitz.

Thus, it is possible to recover those biographical and artistic connections that explain the appearance of the expressionist trends in the art of the region, as well as its continued presence along the several generations of artists. This includes, as well, the possibility of tracing connections within shared cultural horizons, which

107. Frick, María: «Denunciation of War in Latin American Expressionism», in Jacob, Frank; Presiado, Mor (eds.): *War and art: the portrayal of destruction and mass violence*. Paderborn, Brill - Ferdinand Schöningh, 2020, pp. 371-400.

108. Frick, María: «A half-hearted...».

109. Frick, María: «Expressionism in Latin America and Its Contribution to the Modernist Discourse», in Wünsche, Isabel (ed.): *The Routledge Companion to Expressionism in a Transnational Context*. New York, Routledge, 2019, pp. 507-524.

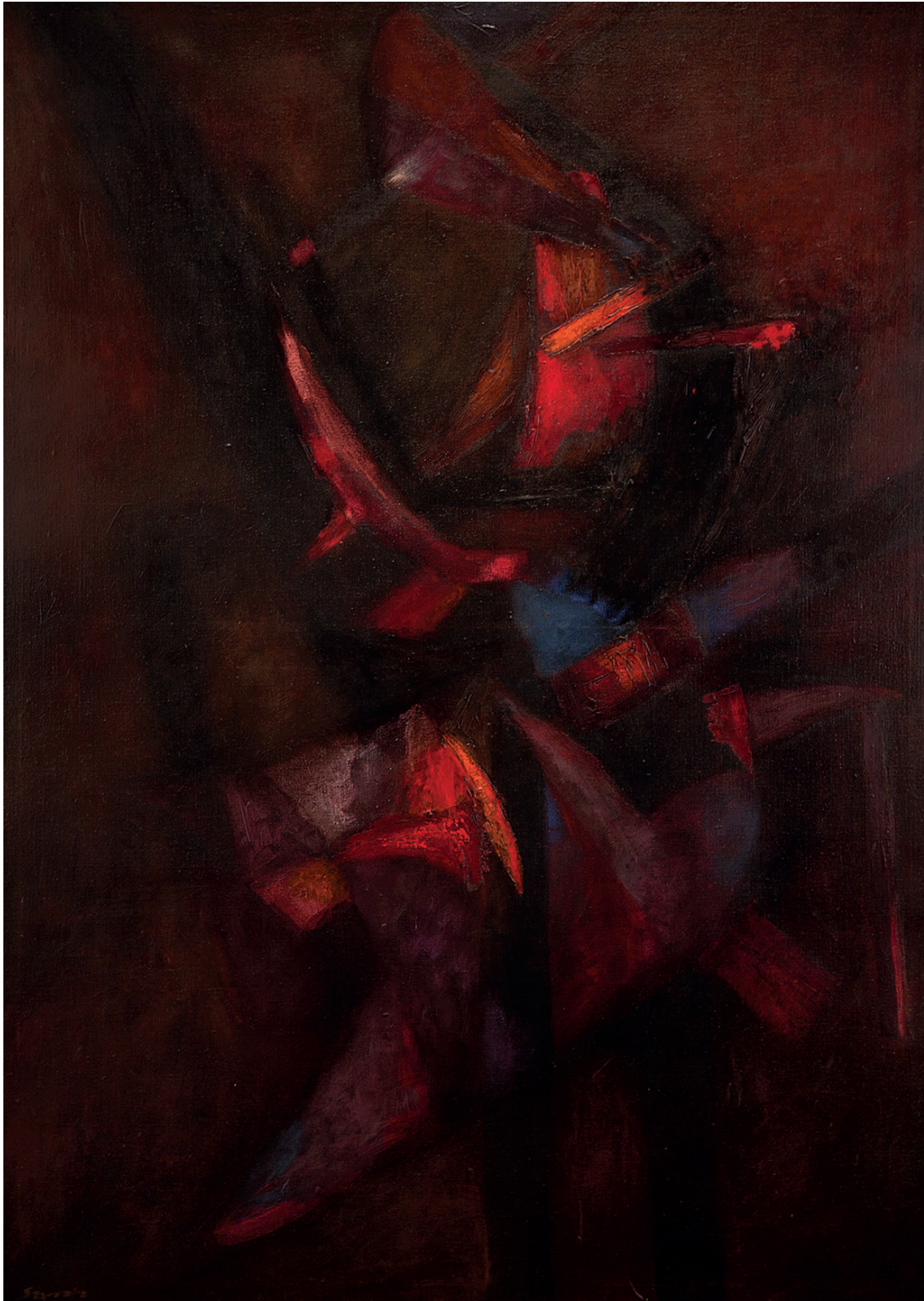


FIGURE 3. FERNANDO DE SZYSZLO, *CAJAMARCA*, 1959, OIL ON CANVAS, 127 X 92 CM. OAS AMA | Art Museum of the Americas Collection, Washington

operate indirectly¹¹⁰ exposing the artists to a sowing of invisible spores¹¹¹ or a spirit of the time that may be perceived by the eyes¹¹².

On the other hand, Giunta proposes a model in which it is the work itself that accounts for its effect, with no need to be explained by reading models that precede it at an epistemological level¹¹³. In this sense, she recovers the artistic deed as a subject of study while, when mentioning the parallelisms and style relationships between the works, she somehow opens the door to the incorporation of formal analysis as an analysis tool. In the case of expressionism, in particular, this entails the possibility of identifying the artistic, compositional and symbolic elements which characterize the body of the representative works of the movement to, thereupon, deepen in the description of the contexts which originated them¹¹⁴. Some illustrative examples would be works such as «Memoria de Grünewald» («Memory of Grünewald»)¹¹⁵ by Ernesto Deira or «El Jinete azul» («The blue Horseman»)¹¹⁶ by Juan Pablo Renzi, in which the artists reactivate and make use of expressionist concepts and formal and symbolic instruments to act in the contemporary Argentinean art scene.

The originality of Giunta's proposal is that it incorporates the artist's intentionality as a fundamental factor which accounts for the significance of the works. As she herself states, it is necessary to consider «the value of those terms that the artists themselves proposed to name their poetics [...] which were thought as innovations and not mere peripheral expressions»¹¹⁷. Thus, Giunta builds a bridge between the timeless quality of the artistic object and its connection to specific historical circumstances. This double temporality enables her to approach the work from the present, without overlooking that the artist is part of the society in which he lives and that the objects he creates constitute a linking point with the other languages of the culture of his time.

For expressionism this proposal entails the need to begin the task of compiling the testimonies of artists who, like Ricardo Grau¹¹⁸, Débora Arango (FIGURE 4)¹¹⁹, José

110. Hobsbawm, Eric: *Historia del siglo XX. 1914-1991*. Barcelona, Editorial Grijalbo, 1997, p. 189.

111. Read, Herbert: *A concise history of modern painting*. Londres, Thames and Hudson, 1974, p. 50.

112. Rodríguez, Marcelo: «La constante expresionista en la pintura chilena», in Guzmán, Fernando; Cortés, Gloria; Martínez, Juan Manuel (eds.): *Arte y crisis en Iberoamérica: Jornadas de Historia del Arte en Chile*. Santiago de Chile, RIL Editores, 2004, pp. 315-324.

113. Parra, Diego: «Aproximaciones a 'Vanguardias simultáneas', de Andrea Giunta», *Artishok, Revista de Arte Contemporáneo* (2016). Online: <https://artishockrevista.com/2016/04/19/aproximaciones-vanguardias-simultaneas-andrea-giunta/> [29/10/2021].

114. Frick, María: «Expresionismo del Sur: hacia la definición de un arte propio», *ILLAPA Mana Tukukuq*, 16 (2019), pp. 86-97.

115. Ernesto Deira, *Memoria de Grünewald*, 1967, sin información, 230 x 300 cm, Colección Familia Deira.

116. Juan Pablo Renzi, *Jinete azul (Der Blaue Reiter)*, 1984, Acrílico y óleo s/tela, 130 x 200, Colección Fernando Fazzolari.

117. Giunta, Andrea: *op. cit.*, p. 19. Own translation from Spanish. Original text: «el valor de aquellos términos que los propios artistas plantearon para nombrar sus poéticas [...] que fueron pensadas como innovaciones, y no como meras expresiones periféricas».

118. Moll, Eduardo: «Encuesta: Ricardo Grau expone sus puntos de vista sobre la pintura y sus escuelas», *Semanario Peruano*, 6/24 (1952), pp. 23-24.

119. El Heraldo de Antioquía (Medellín, Colombia). «Débora Arango, una discípula del Expresionismo» October 3, 1940.



FIGURE 4. DÉBORA ARANGO, *ESQUIZOFRENIA EN LA CÁRCEL (SCHIZOFRENIA IN JAIL)*, 1940, OIL ON CANVAS, 162 x 165 cm. Museo De Arte Moderno de Medellín

Luis Cuevas¹²⁰ or Marina Caram¹²¹, expressed their interest in expressionism. And it also implies the obligation to listen to those who clearly opposed the categorizations made by the critics. Such is the case, for example, of Ernesto Deira, whom Marta Traba registered within expressionist-realism, although he had fiercely declared the opposite years before¹²².

So, this new approach provides the opportunity to delve into the characteristics and repercussions of art movements which –albeit minor compared to more relevant movements– are still relevant from the point of view of art history¹²³. Conversely, as long as expressionism is understood as a cultural movement of global reach, all instances become equally valuable components of this phenomenon¹²⁴. It is necessary to acknowledge this equality in order to reflect on the difference from the symmetry and impartiality, and, thereon, finally accept our original identity.

FINAL COMMENTS

In almost one hundred years, the art historiography in Latin America has swung with diverse pendular movements around the cores of time, context and the artistic object. Currently, however, it appears it is meeting halfway where it is possible to recover many of the contributions that, from different contexts, the critics and historians have made. This historiographic turnaround recovers the works and careers of many artists that remained hidden in the dominant narratives. In the first place, because the break with the tyranny of linear time makes it possible today to go from an exclusive canon to an integrating one. But, besides, it recovers the artistic event from a double temporality, which explains and adds value to the significance of the works. Free from the extra-artistic categorizations and the debates on the reference systems, these are framed in socio-historical contexts from which they acquire an enunciation capacity and a specific place in the international artistic cooperation and exchange networks. But they also recover their original significance to the extent in which they connect to a specific artistic deliberateness.

This makes it somehow possible to think of a new form of anthropophagy in which the different languages and traditions are used to make original contributions, but also in which the previously rejected nomenclatures are used to conquer a place in the international scene. This presents a challenge regarding the capacity of historians to generate reference systems and analysis categories that overcome the political and ideological intentionalities and simultaneously respect the original

120. Cuevas, José Luis: «Cuevas ataca el realismo superficial y regalón de la escuela mexicana», *México en la cultura: Suplemento cultural de Novedades* (Mexico City), March 2 (1958). Online: <https://icaa.mfah.org/s/es/item/772074#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-2906%2C0%2C9112%2C5100> [29/10/2021].

121. *Marina Caram: A alma. Pelo avesso*, exh. cat. São Paulo, Museu Lasar Segall, 2005.

122. *Otra figuración*, cat. exp. Buenos Aires, Galería Peuser, 1961.

123. Gronemeyer, Wiebke: «Expressionism and the Spanish Avant-garde between Restoration and Renovation», in Wünsche, Isabel (ed): *op. cit.*, pp. 376-425, p. 423.

124. Prelog, Petar: «From Anxiety to Rebellion: Expressionism in Croatian Art», in Wünsche, Isabel (ed.): *op. cit.*, pp. 408-425.

intentionality of the different artistic expressions. But there also opens up a possibility to rethink the role of the critics and curators in terms of the acknowledgement and positioning of the artists of the region in the global arena. Finally, the task of continuing the proposal of Giunta and building bridges not only with the works but with the artists as well, so as to bring art history closer to its first protagonists again is yet to be tackled.

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