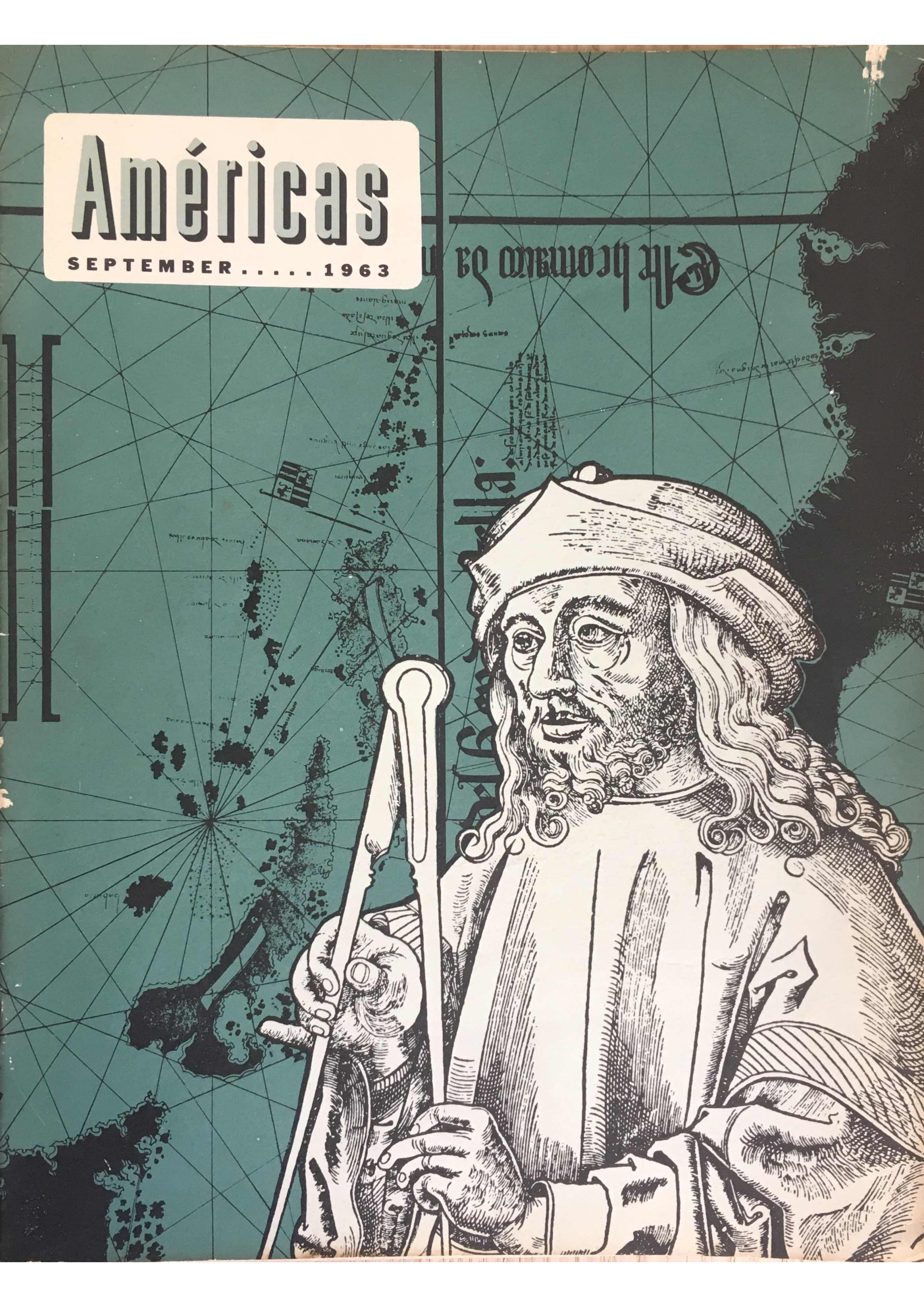
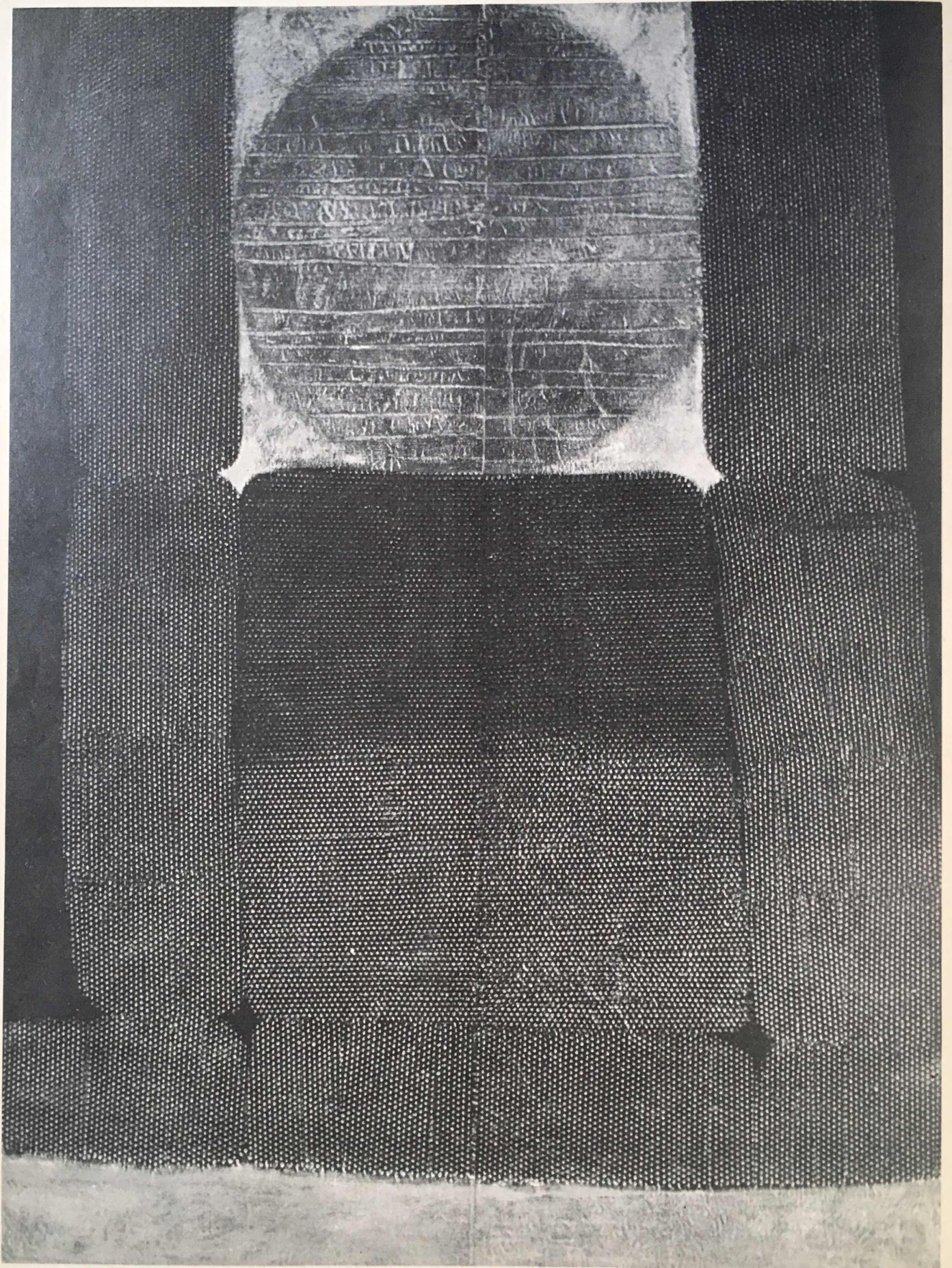


# Américas

SEPTEMBER . . . . . 1963





*Argentine José Antonio Fernández-Muro's Silvered Circle, which won gold medal for painting*

# MEETING IN MADRID

## JOINT EXHIBIT OF SPANISH AND NEW WORLD ARTISTS

JOSÉ GÓMEZ-SICRE

*Luis González Robles,  
organizer of the exhibit*



THERE ARE few places more propitious for a meeting than El Retiro Park. The surroundings are even more advantageous in spring, and on Sunday morning, Madrid glows with peacefulness and light. A cool breeze brings the fragrance of the Guadarrama mountains. Families are coming out of Mass, their faces placid and a little drowsy, the way all Madrileños look before five o'clock in the afternoon. It is the hour for *café au lait* and crullers, for a small glass of wine and a few olives stuffed with anchovies. Large families stroll unhurriedly, without crowding the streets or the parks. At noon the air is already a little humid in El Retiro. The willows are limp. Swimming geese ripple the smooth surface of the park lakes. The children, those children with the faces

of adults with which Madrid is filled, follow unwillingly the peaceful steps of their parents.

This was the setting for a meeting between the art of the Americas and the art of Spain. It took place on a Sunday in May, in the morning. This was no group of fledgling students who had come from across the seas to obtain the blessing of their elders. This was the reunion of a family living on both sides of the Atlantic, with independent points of view but with the warm ties of common descent. When Spain and the New World are paired, in any aspect, the parallel always has a family air, whether in literature, in bullfighting, or, as now, in painting. This meeting went on in two pavilions of El Retiro, from May to July, and was continued, in La Virreina Palace in Barcelona, during August and September.

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The artistic family assembled here was complete; both the members related by blood lines and those who have joined by choice were present. It is not only the nations Spain engendered in the Americas that were here. There were also countries of other Latin origins—Brazil and Haiti—and various ones of Anglo-Saxon stripe: the United States, Canada, Jamaica, and Trinidad. Finally, bringing its old Spanish flavor from beyond the distant seas, the Asiatic Republic of the Philippines was represented. But the show was called "Art of the Americas and Spain." Geographical and cultural considerations gave place to the memory of old historical ties.

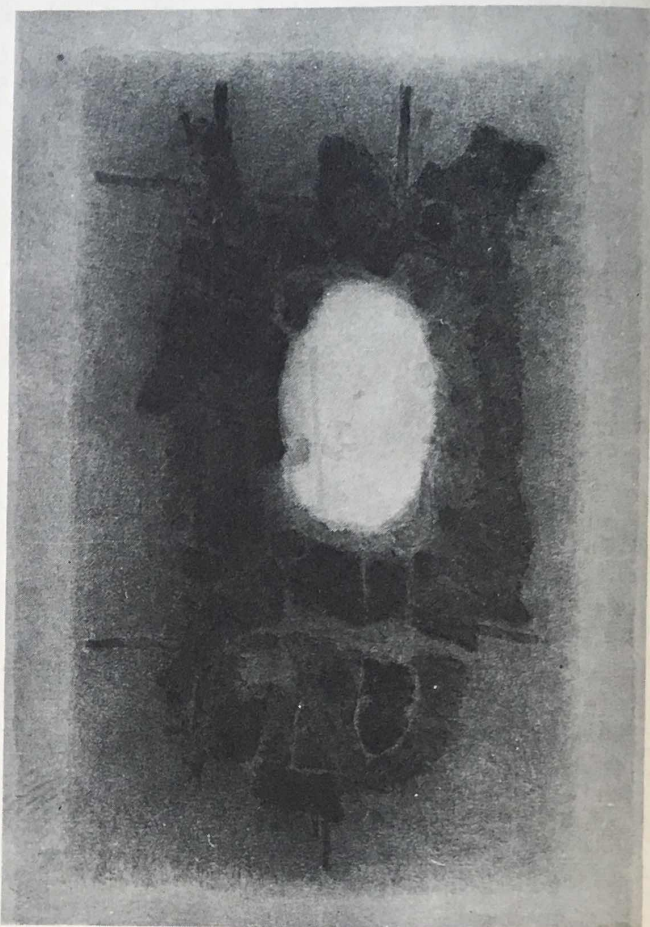
Although the new art in Spain has been firmly established for a decade, it is still unfamiliar and astounding to many people. Among the thousands of visitors who filed through the pavilions in El Retiro there were many who looked perplexed, or rather, perhaps, troubled by this display of more than six hundred daring, radical works. But Spaniards are a people of profound artistic sensibility, with some of the world's greatest painting a part of their history. Behind the amazement provoked by more or less unconventional forms there is a tacit acceptance that awaits only the passing of time to be converted into a taste or an inclination for the new.

### Organizing the Exhibit

The organization responsible for this event of great importance in the artistic relations between the two sides of the Atlantic is the Institute of Hispanic Culture in Madrid, but the labor of assembling and arranging the display of these hundreds of works must be credited to the personal efforts of Luis González Robles, the dynamic animating force in the new Spanish painting.

Traveling through most of the countries represented, González Robles selected the artists and the works for the contest. At home, he summoned a number of Spanish painters, like Amphitryons, in order to bring together this group, the first of its kind to be presented in Europe. The Spanish artists in the exhibit were not competitors; they merely came along to the contest with their overseas colleagues. The only limitation imposed was one of age: no exhibitor should be over forty-five years old. This restriction made possible a wider panorama of the young painters who, in the art world of the Americas and Spain, are the enthusiastic proponents of liberty. It had a negative effect in preventing Europe from getting to know the artists who, thirty years ago and more, began a revision of artistic values and perceptions and turned their backs upon the academic.

It would have been useful to compare the advances made on New World soil during the twenties and thirties by artists like Emilio Pettoruti and Miguel Victorica in Argentina, Joaquín Torres-García and Pedro Figari in Uruguay, the Guatemalan Carlos Mérida and the Mexican Rufino Tamayo, in Mexico, or Armando Reverón, the solitary visionary in his strange redoubt on the beach at Macuto, facing the Venezuelan waters of the Caribbean, or again Amelia Peláez in her tropical patio in Havana. If to the work of these Latin American *francs-tireurs* had



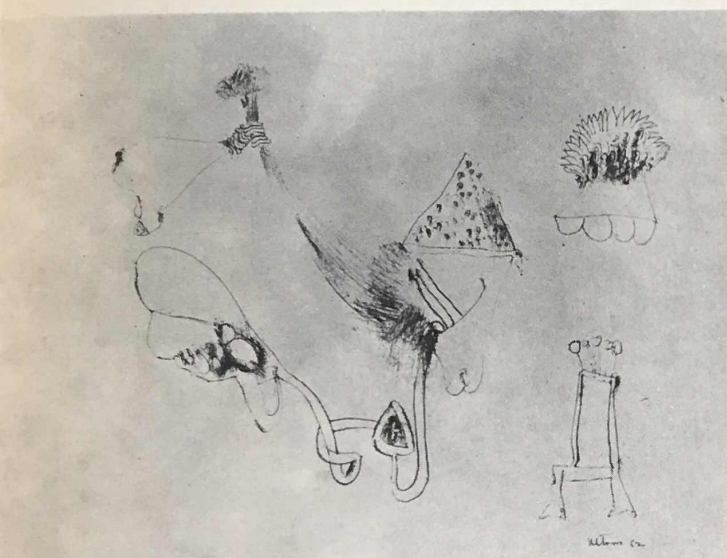
Light I, by Rodolfo Abularach, of Guatemala, won silver medal for first place in drawing

been added a selection of what the modern movement in New York has brought to art, from its Ash Can School between the wars to its abstract expressionism of the day before yesterday, so pursued in Europe today, it would have offered a better view of the Hemisphere. And if to all this had been added the innovators who worked abroad—Manuel Rendón of Ecuador, Roberto Matta of Chile, and Wifredo Lam of Cuba, the importance would have been even greater. Finally, as one of the historical forerunners of aesthetic independence in the Americas, the Mexican Muralist School should have been represented with even a few major works of its leading exponent, José Clemente Orozco, whose personality has made an ever-larger impression upon the past and present of art in the Americas.

An exhibit that included all these important antecedents would have served, once and for all, to make clear the independence of the New World artists from the dictates



Armando Morales, of Nicaragua, with two of his entries



Untitled drawing by John Altoon, of the United States

of the European academies at a time when some countries in the Old World were still subject to them.

### The Jury

A jury made up entirely of Spaniards and other European nationals determined the rewards, fellowships that provided for the artists to visit Europe for a period of time and to continue their work there. This kind of prize completely excluded the Spanish delegation, which thus remained outside the contest. The members of the jury were the art critics Maurits Bilcke, of Belgium; Klaus Jürgen-Fischer, of West Germany; Mário de Oliveira, of Portugal; and José Camón Aznar, of Spain. They were aided in their work by Luis González Robles, as commissioner for the exhibit, and by Enrique Suárez de Puga, as Secretary General of the Institute of Hispanic Culture. The result of their deliberations was, beyond any doubt, completely satisfactory, even when we take into account the difficulties presented by an exhibition in which

the number of excellent artists far exceeded the number of prizes. The fact that the Spanish group was not eligible for any of the rewards made the selection of the winners all the more clear and just, because the suspicion of any local pressure was automatically excluded.

### The Grand Prize

The Grand Prize for the exhibit, a gold medal without an accompanying fellowship, was for the best work entered in the contest. This was awarded to the painting *Círculo Azogado* (Silvered Circle) by the Argentine José Antonio Fernández-Muro, who is considered today one of the most distinguished Latin American abstractionists of the formalist movement. This work, like his two other entries, was executed on metallic paper on a canvas backing, with small circles in repoussé. Within its unvarying design the uneven surface, where the artist has traced his abstract geometric forms, is vibrant with the subdued colors of bronze, silver, or iron.

### Painting

Within the painting division the prize fellowships, consisting of a diploma and an invitation to spend six months in Spain, were awarded to eight artists. Armando Morales, of Nicaragua, is one of the most distinguished figures in the new art of Latin America. His oil *Playa* (Beach), a winner, is executed in the traditional method of oils applied to canvas with a brush and marks a point of departure in his work, which is today more angular and schematic, more rectilinear, forsaking irregular contours, chromatic transparencies, and heavy impasto. It has also moved farther from the figurative, without losing its links with reality, and is thus reduced to a series of unencumbered symbols, difficult to decipher.

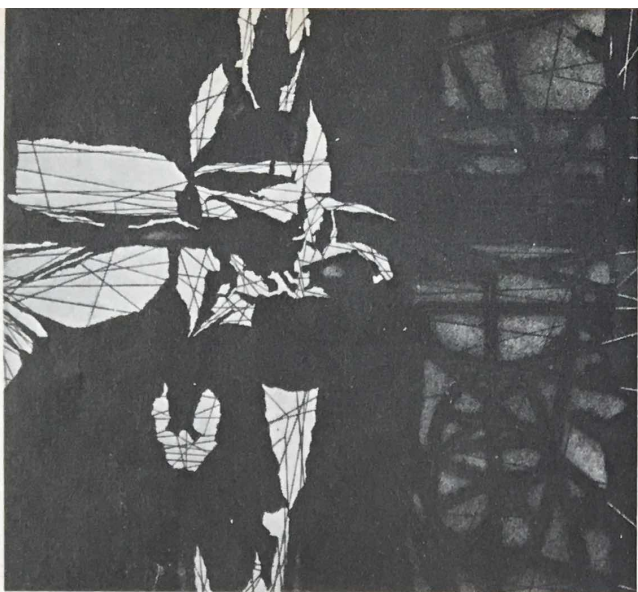
Harold Town is a new figure who has recently come to the fore in Canada. With his abstract painting and his figurative drawing he shows notable competence in two directions. His winning painting, *Tyranny of the Angles*, is not the best of his three entries. His other two are more imaginative and richer in artistic solutions, without altering his somewhat baroque and chaotic style.

The young Cuban Ramón Dorrego, now an exile in Madrid, won a fellowship with a canvas entitled *Divagaciones Sobre un Rifle* (Digressions on a Rifle), to which divers elements had been added in an interesting scheme of composition without distracting from the central theme.

To the Argentine Carlos Cañas, a member of the Buenos Aires group Sur, a prize was awarded for one of his versions of *Pampa Blanca* (White Pampa), a theme that impels him to lay on his pigment impulsively, in a style that borders on the nonfigurative.

*Al Tocar tu Puerta* (Knocking on Your Door), a painting within the new figurative trend, almost subhuman, which is a current response to abstractionism, won another of the fellowships. The author of this oil, Gastón Orellana, of Chile, whose best work has been done in almost mural dimensions, is now a member of the Hondo group in Madrid, where he is beginning to acquire a reputation.

Simón Becerra, of Venezuela, who is also living in the Spanish capital, won a fellowship for his oil *Flores*

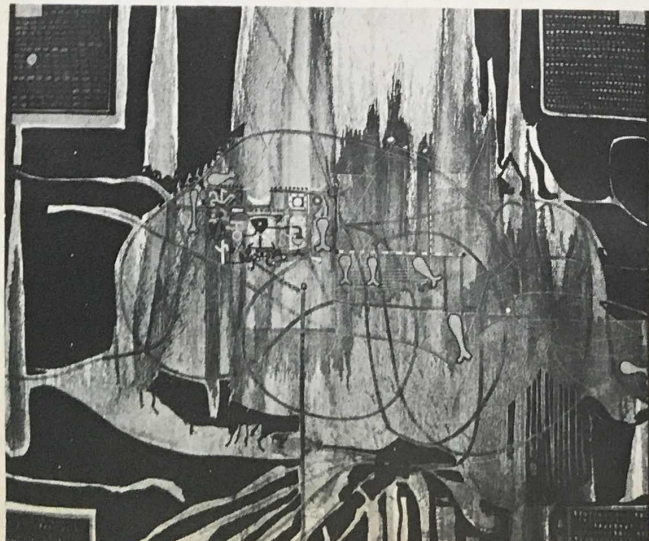


Number 48, metal engraving by Roberto de Lamónica, of Brazil, won silver medal for engraving



Knocking on Your Door, oil by Gastón Orellana, of Chile

Tyranny of the Angles, oil by Harold Town, of Canada



(Flowers), done with the greatest conceptual freedom, verging on the abstract.

A non-figurativist, the Peruvian José Milner, was the recipient of one of the prizes for his *Oil No. 28*, which does justice to the new generation of painters who have recently graduated from the National School of Fine Arts in Lima, among whom Milner shows real promise.

The best young painter of Paraguay, beyond any dispute, is Carlos Colombino, whose work has represented his country in various international exhibits and contests. On this occasion this unusual artist, who has also done sculpture and is completing his studies in architecture, won one of the prize fellowships with his *Painting I*, an abstract composition incised in a piece of wood five feet square that looks like a monumental wood-carving on which traces of paint remain.

Two special prizes given in the painting division were invitations for the artist to spend some time in Spain. These additional prizes were awarded by a special committee and at the request of the jury itself, because it considered that, in relation to the total number of entries, the number of artists deserving of recognition far exceeded the number of prizes offered. The winners were Fernando Botero, of Colombia, who showed three oils of generous proportions in which the figures, full of humor, were done with a lineal use of the pigment; and Larry Rivers, of the United States, whose three large canvases presented a broad span of suggestions ranging from the humorous to the perverse. In these recent compositions Rivers does not abuse his outlines in the way that gave his earlier work an unfinished look; now he composes transparent colors in a tonal organization of great artistic validity, making of a group of elements executed with sharp realism a suggestive abstract composition.

### Drawing

In the drawings division there were three travel prizes, and in addition a silver medal for first place. This went to Rodolfo Abularach, of Guatemala, for his ink on paper drawing that was almost a mural, entitled *Luz I* (Light I), a labor of extreme conscientiousness and patience, of great virtuosity in the application of inter-crossed penstrokes, with which this artist obtains subtle variations in chiaroscuro. His forms suggest a relationship with Mayan art and are constructed with minute lines of varying intensity and width that, against the white of the paper, range over the whole scale of grays to the dense black of the pure ink.

Second prize went deservedly to John Altoon, of California, for an untitled composition of rare linear strength conceived with a calligraphy that undulates and closes over strange forms which give us eloquent measure of a creative artist whose work must be followed closely.

The third prize went to a work entitled *Revoada de Aves Bravas* (Flight of Wild Birds); because the drawing was done in gouache and because of the obviousness of its abstract composition, this was, in this writer's opinion, an erroneous award. The recipient was Helena Maria Beltran de Barros, of Brazil.

## Engraving

Another Brazilian, Roberto de Lamónica, fully deserved the first prize in the engraving division, which was awarded him for his *No. 28*. Lamónica is perhaps the most important figure today in the graphic arts of his country, which are the best developed in all of Latin America in the field of engraving. Lamónica, working in abstractionism, maintains a constant dramatic force in his forms, invented with legitimate creative skill and executed with the most refined technique, which does not seek novel or accidental effects, or overlays of thick color. His engravings are monochrome, conceived with the constant purity manifested only by great artists who have found their own medium of expression.

Second prize went to John Paul Jones, of the United States, for a strongly expressive figurative engraving called *Woman in a Landscape*. Third prize was won by Julio Zachrisson, Panamanian painter and engraver who has been for some time in Madrid, after a long stay in Mexico. His engraving *Muerte de Chimbonbó* (Death of Chimbonbó), which has a quality of pathos reminiscent of certain aspects of Mexican expressionist art, is done with sure strokes, in sharp drawing, unbastardized.

In these two divisions, as in the painting division, two special prizes were awarded by a committee, at the suggestion of the jury. In drawing, a work by the Uruguayan Nelson Ramos was chosen, and in graphic arts an important engraving by Nathan Oliveira, of the United States.

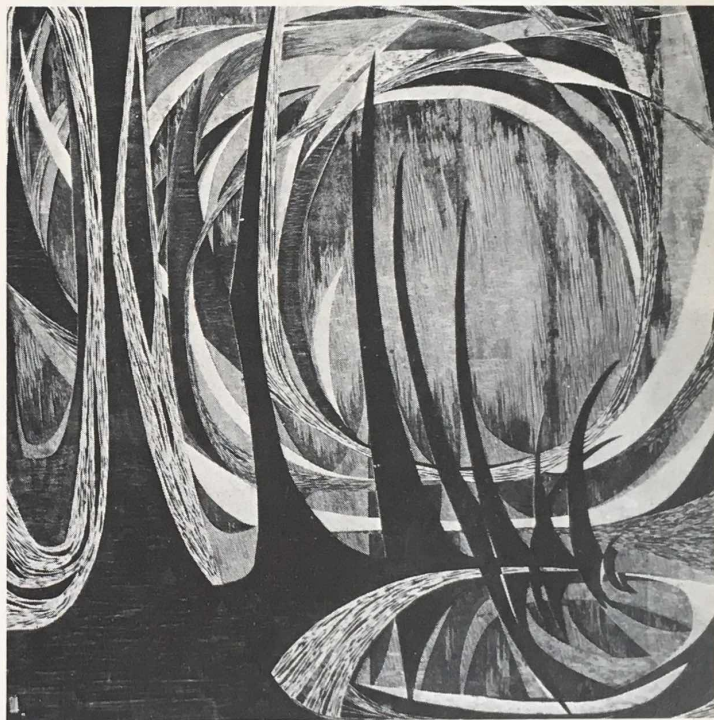
As the jury found in considering the entries, the two pavilions abounded with works that merited rewards. It is regrettable that the awards did not carry the right of acquisition, for then the considerable number of important works that would have remained on that side of the Atlantic could have been the start of a museum that would bring together the contemporary art of Spain and the Americas. The idea fired my imagination. I would plan such a museum.

## An Imaginary Museum

To fill the walls of my imaginary museum I must spend several mornings in El Retiro. I walk slowly through the halls so the profusion of six hundred pictures will not dazzle my eyes, and my mental image will not be obliterated by my real surroundings. The prize winners I include as a matter of course. Perhaps one of them might be omitted; for some artist I might choose another entry instead of the one that won the award. The important point is that the prize-winning entries, taken as a group, are a collection worthy of being the basis of the museum that my imagination is building in the park that houses the exhibit. In a few seconds I have constructed its austere mass, white, with long, low walls free of ornamentation or distracting motifs, in which the collection of paintings from the two sides of the Atlantic would be installed. Once the winners have been accepted, thoughts of their predecessors and others who were absent come to my mind. They cannot be disregarded. They are the ligature, the very *raison d'être* for all this beauty that Madrid welcomes today. But space does not



United Nations Painting, oil by Larry Rivers, of the United States.  
Below: Painting I, mixed media, by Carlos Colombino, of Paraguay



Appearance of the Virgin of Fatima, oil by Fernando Botero, of Colombia



permit me to dwell on the irremediable, and I must hold myself to discussing what is actually before my eyes. Happily, it is an imposing assemblage.

### Painters from Spain

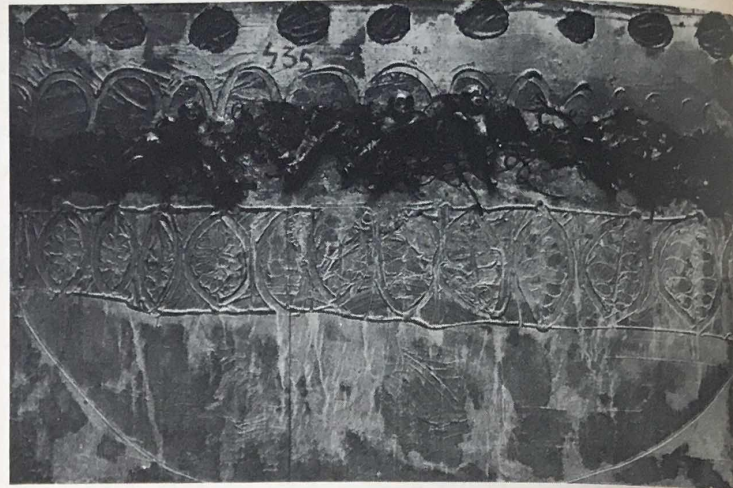
My first selections, to fill one wing, will be the most trend-setting artists in the Spanish entry. Since the museum would be in Madrid and they the unseen hosts, it is logical to give them priority after the winning paintings have been hung on the walls.

My Spanish group cannot be large, nor should it be. Displaying the works of all the artists who merit it, but were not included in the exhibit, must be left to the real museums of Madrid. I will choose among the entrants. I begin with Modesto Cuixart, today one of the foremost figures—to many, the foremost—in the Catalan school. I will not let myself be seduced by his collage of dolls on a dark background. I prefer his canvases done with a muted palette, with great drops of sealing wax that suggest the haloes of saints and seem to lend his large areas covered thickly with lava the mystical quality that is found in a certain period of medieval Catalan painting. Selection is difficult in the Luis Feito room—three paintings in red and black. One might almost say some were positives and others negatives. It is as though the same picture were playing hide and seek. The three are solidly executed, spirited, almost aggressive. The material is splendidly spaced, to the point where it might be black on red or red on black. I don't want to start thinking about allegories, or about how the French have thought of Spain, since Mérimée. I choose any one of the three, regretting that in doing so I am breaking up their unity.

Luis García-Ochoa is a figurativist and it seems to me that his painting *El Dignatario* (The Dignitary) completely achieves its iconoclastic intent, and with a humorous touch reminiscent of the Germanic. Like all expression of subjective exasperation in art, it almost slips into caricature. It is frightening to reflect that the analysis of a character can lie in the way a gesture is caught.

For Antonio Suárez, that calm and constant Spanish painter, any one of his three oils might be chosen; and, if it didn't give him too large a representation, his three excellent offerings in the drawing division could be added without hesitation. Suárez is to me the Spaniard par excellence because in him more than in any other painter of the peninsula today the very essence of Spanish painting is most clearly embodied. His austere grey masses are not only akin to El Greco's skies, which to Aldous Huxley have a visceral impact; inevitably, whenever I see his work I associate it in spirit with outstanding fragments of the great Spanish paintings of the seventeenth century. On passing into Suárez' pictures (across three centuries) the clouds and the folds of cloth take on an eloquent vigor, a romantic air, the product of volumes disposed with certainty in the language of the abstract.

Any one of José María de Labra's three entries might be selected. His sharp, tense cords against the pictorial surface are networks that impose order and aplomb in constant geometric allusion.



Painting, oil and collage by Modesto Cuixart, one of the leading representatives of the contemporary Catalan school

Painting 160, oil by Antonio Suárez, contemporary Spanish painter whose work is reminiscent of El Greco's skies

To avoid an overly restricted view of Spanish painting today it is necessary to include an intricate canvas by Antonio Guijarro that is a rewarding return to Cubism; another, by Ricardo Macarrón, a sincere approximation of expressionism; and an oil or a tempera by José Vento, with that treatment of the figure, at once exalted and despairing, that makes him one of the new humanists. In the work of Juan-José Tharrats I prefer his experiments in engraving, which he did not enter in the exhibit, to the oils by which he was represented.

To fill out the Spanish group in my imaginary museum I would have three young painters in whom I have confidence: Vicente Vela, César Manrique, and Ignacio Yraola.

### United States

Catalogue in hand, I continue through the pavilion. In the entries from the United States, Colombia, and Argentina not only are there important individual painters but, as groups, the entries are distinguished. We must accept all of them. Within the groups, however, there are favorites.

I must confess I have never been attracted by the mural aspirations of Larry Rivers' paintings because they seem to me, basically, academic sketches. In this exhibit the artist has organized the realistic elements in his canvases according to a rhythmic concept of masses of color that brings out the solidity and beauty of the painting. Any one of them would be worthy of a museum. The same is true of his compatriots Nathan Oliveira and John Paul





Jones, both exponents of an expressionism that has been gaining ever greater importance in the art of their country, where abstract art has been dominant.

To represent the abstractionist tendency I would choose Grace Hartigan, for her aggressive combinations of complementary tones, and the lyrical Stephen Greene, from whom I would request some of his more recent works, with their clearer colors. Two other artists would be included in the U.S. section, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, ground-breakers in the movement known as Pop Art, who are represented here, however, by works that are completely within the realm of the pictorial and which I could unhesitatingly include in my museum.

#### Argentina

Argentina offers proof here of the high level of her artistic development. There are figurative artists here who belong to a group that advocates a monstrous neo-humanism, with fierce figures done in corrosive colors, generally unblended, just as they come from the tube. The rather baroque composition and drawing make it a mass of elements that are hard to identify. Outstanding in this movement, and they should be included, are Jorge de la Vega, whose diptych *Vacío* (Empty) merits the solid wall of a museum; Luis Felipe Noé, whose colors are darker and whose forms are more clearly stated than formerly, with three large canvases here equally worthy of being chosen; and Rómulo Macció, who has toned down the intensity of his raw colors with neutral areas of greys. Among his offerings I am inclined toward the *Doble*

*Retrato* (Double Portrait). Ernesto Deirá is the newest member of the group but, like the others, he shows a sure conceptual maturity that gives his three entries the same validity.

Despite the many good Argentine painters who adhere to the figurative school, a new non-objective movement has been growing stronger in the last ten years. The high degree of technical proficiency of Argentine painting and its constant aspiration toward greatness in professional painting has been able to assimilate and to convert the various abstract trends, regardless of the degree of sloppiness behind them, into finished painting. Thus the various currents that have been assimilated into the context of contemporary Argentine art have taken on a characteristic stamp that marks them as Argentine. To represent this aspect, the Grand Prize winner of this exhibit would suffice, because of Fernández-Muro's stature and significance in the art of his country; nevertheless, the company of his wife, Sarah Grilo, is an almost inescapable complement to his work, which has evolved from geometric rigidity into a free and lyrical phase of the highest quality. Within this lyric style, though more austere, I would choose one of the canvases shown by Clorindo Testa, in rich textured greys with cryptic forms. With it I would put one of Antonio Seguí's formal harmonies in ochre. Following a freer course, there would be a place for Mario Pucciarelli, whose experiments are now taking an informalist direction, with the addition of foreign elements to the canvas, objects that disrupt his pleasing tonal unities superfluously and without adding anything to the intrinsic merit of his work. If some recent composition without such additions could not be found for the museum, I would take the one called *Situación Fenoménica* (Phenomenalistic Situation). I would also take one of the three canvases by Kazuya Sakai who, working within abstract expressionism, has evolved from the monochrome or bitonal to a vivid iridescence of pigments. The entry of Carlos Squirru, one of the youngest in his generation, accredits him with an imaginative personality. The objects he uses as stencil patterns (lace, napkins, hardware nuts) are in sharp formal relation to the painting itself. Any one of his three compositions is eligible for the Argentine section in the imaginary museum.

#### Colombia

Colombia is currently introducing into Latin American art a fresh and imaginative movement whose main values are in the figurative direction. The tardiness in arrival of the three canvases of Alejandro Obregón, the foremost artist in his country, prevented his receiving a prize that would have been just from any point of view, as was Botero's. It is hard to choose among these three canvases full of the tropics, iridescent, into which Obregón has poured his powers of imagination, his painter's legitimate inventiveness that discovers solutions while executing a work. How could I underestimate the tenderness of the large blue planes in *Colibrí* (Humming Bird), or forget the baroque ecstasy of *Flor Carnívora* (Carnivorous Flower)? Torn between the two, I give them each a

place in my dream museum. The stature of the painter justifies it.

In the place of honor, at the same time, I put Enrique Grau. His work has returned to a healthy realism that combines the grace and freedom of Roman mosaics and frescoes with the decorative ingenuity of New World popular art. But in these figures of enigmatic adolescent boys and plump young girls there is an echo of Velázquez, a humorous, slightly malicious salute, in greys and roses, to the great painter of the Court of Philip IV. I choose with assurance the *Desnudo* (Nude), a plump young girl whose impudence, incongruously, confers upon her an air of gravity. I would also include *El Rebozo* (The Shawl), a pencil drawing that confirms Grau's competence in that medium.

Three interpretations of a moon theme introduce David Manzur, one of the most solid painters in Colombia today. Without departing from the figurative, these examples are a magnificent example of artistic variations that dilute the moon theme in movement of subtle tonality. *Formas para Copiar la Luna* (Forms for Copying the Moon) strikes us as the most successful of this excellent threesome.

In the engraving division, also, two Colombians demonstrated the contemporary strength of their country's art—Omar Rayo's intaglios, so sanitary looking, engraved in relief on a rich-textured paper of stark white, which produce familiar forms done in a purist manner, in eloquent synthesis. The monotypes of Augusto Rivera are also intense. For the imaginary collection I set aside *Vaso* (Vase), by Rayo, and *Caballo Muerto*, by Rivera.

#### Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil

There is a perceptible unity to the Mexican group that bespeaks a conscious evasion, through abstractionism, of the canons imposed for years by the muralists who held that art must be subordinate to the dialectic. The presence of three good painters who work in abstract expressionism offers a new aspect, of interest to those who have been hoping for Mexican canvases descriptive of national life or of the socioeconomic problems. The maturity of Manuel Felguérez and Lilia Carrillo, evident in the solidity of line, in the color and forms, obliges us to include them both, along with Fernando García Ponce, who is in the same vein. Enrique Echeverría's interpretation of figurative themes on an abstract plane, in spite of its eclecticism, merits being represented in the Mexican group of our museum, which must, of course, be filled out by trends not represented here. I choose *Futbolistas*, by Echeverría.

Ecuador's contribution seems to have forgotten the long period of focusing on the Indian today that has marked the country's art. Without forsaking the figurative, but interpreting it in an archaic idiom, the entries of one of Ecuador's leading artists, Aníbal Villacís, have an impressive quality. His oil *Precolombino* (Pre-Columbian) will serve in our hypothetical museum to demonstrate the possibilities in turning to the pre-Hispanic past in search of artistic messages that please today's sensibilities. Another really talented Ecuadorian is Enrique Tábara who, like Villacís, is now living in Spain. His

thematic and technical restlessness make his work at times artistically uneven, and even in this show his three entries differ considerably, although each is of high quality. Oswaldo Viteri, of Quito, joins the other two on this honored path that Ecuadorian art has recently followed, and to represent it I choose his *Origen*.

Brazil's foremost claim to a place in a contemporary museum lies in its graphic movement. Along with the prize-winning work of Roberto Lamónica, all three of whose prints should be included, we would also take a work from each of the new Brazilian engravers entered in the contest.

#### Chile and Peru

Chile has today an excellent team of young artists who are searching for new concepts and new techniques. I choose a work of each of the participants, which would form a bold vanguard in any modern museum. Nemesio Antúnez, of the compositions in luminous planes, would be asked to send *La Bestia Cordillera* (Cordillera Beast), one of his major successes. Ernesto Barreda has abandoned the theme of doors and windows that he was so fond of—we might say they have been opened to space in search of romantic light effects rendered in temperate tones on a roughly textured surface. His *Nocturno* would be a handsome addition to any gallery. Among the youngest I would unhesitatingly choose Enrique Castrocid, although instead of the dense, dark examples presented here it would be some of the work that he is doing in New York at present, an anatomical description of imaginary flora and fauna. The three magnificent paintings of Rodolfo Opazo, which outline sensual, glaucous forms against sombre tones, are suitably mounted against a dark wall. The decision is difficult, but I decide on *Maldoror*, with its subtle sexual overtones, an enduring characteristic of Opazo's work.

Miguel Ángel Cuadros, Enrique Galdós, and the prize-winner José Milner are three young Peruvians who recently joined the ranks of active professional artists in Lima and who prefer to use an entirely nonfigurative idiom. All three should be represented, as the newest and youngest exponents of Peruvian modern art, because, as in this whole region of South America, it has been under the domination of the contemporary Indian theme in both painting and sculpture.

Several mornings have now been spent at the Art of the Americas and Spain Exhibit in El Retiro Park. Full summer has arrived, and the leaves are well green. Madrid is beginning to suffocate in the midday heat that grows even more intense with the burning sunlight streaming through the skylights. It would be better to come back in the later afternoon when the sun is less intense. I stay until closing time. I take photographs and continue making notes. My notebook is filled. I write names, categories—but it is impossible to mention in detail all the pictures and engravings that interest me.

#### Uruguay

I notice that I have skipped Uruguay, and I rectify that. In a room that was off my course, I discover three



Death of Chimbombó, etching by Julio Zachrisson, of Panama



Young Peruvian painter José Milner's Oil 28

important oils of a new figure in that country, José Gamarra, in which I find a rare gift for creativity despite the consistent muteness of blacks and dark colors he uses for skillful compositions of real originality. His *Painting 62918* has more than enough merit to be included in our non-existent museum. I also take the painting *Lambaréné*, by the archbaroque Carlos Páez Vilaró, with its proliferation of strong, dense lines.

#### Dominican Republic, Panama, Haiti

I would like to finish my visiting, but each time I find more candidates for mention. I should leave, but I turn to a wall where I find a Dominican artist, Paul Giudicelli, who paints with an attractive, New World kind of expressionism. I write down *Baile del Ganga* (Dance of the Grouse) and continue. Near the exit there are two Panamanian artists whose presence in the new movement in their country I consider important. Alberto Dutary is one of them, and I select *Parábola*, a phantasmal figurative oil, done in washed, transparent tones. Guillermo Trujillo is the other Panamanian, a representationalist whose work is based on a massive solidity that has much to do with the pre-Hispanic art of his country. I prefer the oil of rich color and impasto called *La Amiga del Guerrero* (Warrior's Sweetheart).

Near the door of the main pavilion I note down my last selection: Prefete Duffaut, an extraordinary popular painter, self-taught or primitive (whichever term you prefer) whose inventive powers I have always praised when speaking of this closed, narrow, but fascinating world of painting done only by instinct. In the case of Duffaut, the Haitian, it is good enough to be hung side by side with the best artists in this vein, those who produce with the liberated perceptivity of the intellect. His ferocious, virginal chromatism, African in essence, authentically Antillian in its import, makes me hesitate between

two works of imagination—*Torre de Babel* (Tower of Babel) and *Ciudad Imaginada* (Imaginary City)—and one that might reflect reality, *Ciudad de Jacmel* (City of Jacmel). But, happy to say, all three are actually the port of Jacmel; imperious reality slips unaware into the world of the primitive painter when he would invent something new, and sways him by its influence. Overrunning his instinct, it leads him always to his own doorstep. The result is delightful, and I choose his *Babel*, which has mural aspirations (it recalls the one the artist did in the Episcopal Cathedral in Port-au-Prince) and is much like a polychrome tapestry, as gay as a tropical morning in the Antilles. For Duffaut we will set aside a special room, dedicated to the marvelous followers of the tradition of Sunday painters, members of Rousseau's guild who, in Haiti, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and Central America, keep creativity alive without worrying about the dictates of the academy or the visual adventures of those who rush out in search of new worlds of phantasy. Mentally I begin to list New World primitive painters who are not represented here and who, one day perhaps, we may bring together in this museum that my imagination is constructing.

When I left El Retiro for the last time the lights of Madrid were already on. I went out near the Alcalá Gate, and walked toward Cibeles Plaza. Near the fountain, symbol of the city, I rested my eyes, tired by the exercise of looking at so much color. I looked back toward El Retiro. In the evening mist, surrounded by trees, I saw a simple plain white building. The museum of the two sides of the Atlantic took shape before me again. I could almost see the white letters, in relief, that would say Museum of Spain and the Americas. I stood there happy among the passers-by. After all, it is not expensive to dream. This exhibit that had brought me to Madrid had led me to build not a castle—but a museum—in Spain. ☞