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**THE DAVIS MUSEUM CHALLENGES THE EXPECTED IN
*ART_LATIN_AMERICA: AGAINST THE SURVEY***

Important Collection of Diverse Works on View for the First Time



WELLESLEY, Mass. – The Davis Museum at Wellesley College presents ***Art_Latin_America: Against the Survey***, an exhibition highlighting important works of modern and contemporary Latin American and Latinx art from the Museum’s extensive permanent collections. The show features 150 objects by nearly 100 artists—including 32 women—from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Also

represented are U.S. and European artists who worked in Latin America, as well as many of Latin American descent based in the United States. The exhibition, on view in the Camilla Chandler and Dorothy Buffum Chandler Gallery and Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Gallery, will run from February 7 through June 9, 2019.

“Using the diversity of the Davis Museum collection as a case study—especially in terms of artists’ origins and interests—we are hoping to shake things up and break new ground for the way museums present ‘Latin American Art,’” said James Oles, Adjunct Curator of Latin American Art at the Davis Museum and Senior Lecturer in the Art Department at Wellesley College. “The selection of works will surprise both specialists and our broader public, and will hopefully serve as a springboard for debate, launching fresh ideas and innovative scholarship.”

Art_Latin_America emerged from the Davis Museum’s desire to bring its expansive collection of “Latin American art,” formed mainly over the past two decades, to public attention for the first time, and to align its presentation with recent historiographic and curatorial advances in the field. The checklist was shaped by expanding the parameters as broadly as possible, an approach signaled by the underscores in the title. On one side *Art*, from abstract paintings to photo-journalism; on the other

America, understood broadly. Between them, “Latin” refers to that particular part of the hemisphere colonized by Spain and Portugal. The underscores of the title function as productive gaps for new meanings, suggesting rather than restricting what goes in between. The first —“Art_Latin” — means that we include art *from* Latin America, art *of* Latin America, art *made in* Latin America but also art *about* Latin America, or even simply *related to* Latin America. Crucially, this includes work by artists visiting the region from elsewhere, sometimes with profound impact on local artists (such as Edward Weston and Tina Modotti in 1920s Mexico) and by those who passed through relatively unremarked (Walker Evans in Cuba, Danny Lyon in Colombia, Ann Parker in Guatemala).

The second — “Latin_America” — questions where art was produced. Most survey exhibitions in the field follow the map, using the Rio Grande as a powerful dividing line. They include works produced outside of the region by artists born there, and by émigrés and exiles who moved to Latin America. However, they often exclude artists of Latin American descent born in the mainland U.S. and Puerto Rico. The gap between *Latin* and *America* in the title thus stands not so much for missing articles or verbs as for single characters: one is the hyphen, which ties together the words, but others — o, a, @, x — push them further apart, amplifying the pool to bring in works by Latinos and Latinas, as well as artists who seek gender neutrality through new terms like Latin@ and Latinx.

The exhibition is organized in eight thematic sections: Identity and Territory, War and Loss, Protest and Propaganda, Farmers and Workers, City and Country, Saints and Rituals, Models and Mothers, and Gesture and Geometry. Each includes works across media from different periods and locations, including the U.S., and juxtaposes the expected and unexpected.

For example, viewers will see intimate surrealist visions by María Izquierdo and Alice Rahon, abstract compositions by Lygia Pape and Fanny Sanín, and photographs by Manuel Álvarez Bravo and Grete Stern. Also included are major paintings by Roberto Matta, Francis Alÿs, and Liliana Porter, drawings by José Clemente Orozco and Joaquín Torres-García, prints by Diego Rivera and Rufino Tamayo, and sculptural works by Alfredo Jaar, Jesús Rafael Soto, and Ana Mendieta.

Many objects have been rarely seen or published, and some are by artists unfamiliar even to experts. These include political prints by Uruguayan artist Leandro Castellanos Balparda, as well as Sergio Sergi and Abraham Regino Vigo from Argentina, and several recent acquisitions, such as vibrant abstract paintings by Puerto-Rican artist Olga Albizu and Mexican artist Myra Landau,

Building the Collection

At Wellesley College, works of art from Latin America, or by Latin American and Latino artists, entered the museum sporadically beginning in the 1950s, but in the past two decades interest has intensified. The Davis Museum now houses over 550 works that can be connected to the region broadly known as “Latin America,” whether as site of production, place of origin, or point of reference. The holdings are a fundamental part of the curriculum in several academic departments at Wellesley, and also serve as a vital regional resource.

Catalogue & Contributors

The works included in *Art__Latin__America* are further explored in a fully-illustrated publication, designed by the award-winning firm of Stoltze Design. The catalogue includes an introductory essay by the curator, followed by 70 object entries of varying lengths commissioned from 40 leading artists, scholars, curators, and collectors from across the Americas. Providing new readings of both famous and overlooked artists and works, the catalogue will be a major resource, posing a challenge to canonical representations and overviews of Latin American art and reveling in discoveries as well as unresolved issues.

Related Exhibition: *Disappearances*

Concurrently with *Art__Latin__America*, the Davis presents *Disappearances*, an exhibition that signals the richness of video work from the past decade. Presented in the Joan Levine Freedman '57 and Richard I Freedman Gallery, videos by three leading Latin American artists refer metaphorically to those who have vanished because of state crimes and political violence.

- In *4000 Shots* (2010; 60 min.), Brazilian artist Jonathas Andrade (b. 1982) shows a rapid-fire sequence of men caught unaware on the streets of Buenos Aires, which recall the black-and-white photographs of the disappeared.
- *Earth* (2013; 33 min.), by Guatemalan artist Regina José Galindo (b. 1974), documents a tense performance in which an excavator carves out a burial pit around the artist's naked body.
- Claudia Joskowicz (b. 1968), originally from Bolivia and now an assistant professor at Wellesley College, presents *Some Dead Don't Make a Sound* (2015; 10:30 min.), a mournful yet lyrical homage to the disappearance of 43 Mexican students in the town of Ayotzinapa.

Disappearances is generously supported by the Mildred Cooper Glimcher '61 Endowed Fund.

Admission

Tickets are required for entry to *Art_Latin_America*. General admission, \$20; Wellesley College alumnae, \$12. Free entry for all students with I.D., Wellesley College faculty and staff, Friends of Art members, and Durant Society members. For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit www.theDavis.org

Support for *Art_Latin_America*

The exhibition and catalogue were realized with generous funding from: Wellesley College Friends of Art at the Davis; Judith Blough Wentz '57 Museum Programs Fund; Mellon Endowment for Academic Programs at the Davis Museum; The Helyn MacLean Endowed Program Fund for Contemporary and South Asian Art; The James Wilson Rayen Museum Gift; and the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation.

EXHIBITION-RELATED EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

Spring Opening Celebration

Thursday, February 7

5:30 p.m., Collins Cinema

Keynote Lecture from James Oles

“Other Histories of Abstraction: Women Artists in *Art_Latin_America*”

Women artists have long been a focus of attention at the Davis Museum. Inspired by major works by Rosa Aclé, Alice Rahon, Lygia Pape, Gego, Fanny Sanín, and Liliana Porter on view in the exhibition, this keynote lecture considers the essential role played by women artists in the history of abstraction in Latin American art—and beyond.

6:30 - 9 p.m., Davis Lobby

Opening Reception

6:45 p.m., Davis Lobby and Galleries

Welcome Remarks

The Davis Museum hosts an opening for the Spring 2019 exhibitions—including six special installations that bring spectacular energy and creative artistic innovation to the Wellesley College campus. Visitors can see the major exhibition, *Art_Latin_America: Against the Survey*, which takes a fresh look at a hotspot of Davis collecting, along with *Disappearances: Three Video Artists from Latin America*; *Yinka Shonibare MBE: Guns Drawn*; *Tabitha Soren: Surface Tension*; *Bread and Roses: The Social Documentary of Milton and Anne Rogovin*; the ongoing presentation of *Daniela Rivera: Fragmentos para una historia del olvido/Fragments for a history of displacement*; and rotations that renew the presentations in its Permanent Collections Galleries.

Wellesley Alumnae and Latin American Art Symposium

Friday, February 8

9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Davis Museum

Hosted in conjunction with *Art_Latin_America: Against the Survey*, this symposium honors the late Elizabeth P. Benson, Class of 1945 (1924-2018), a pioneering figure in the study of pre-Columbian art, and brings together art historians, curators, art dealers, and collectors for a lively series of talks that

together reveal the impact of Wellesley alumnae on the fields of Latin American and Latinx art. Free but tickets required; tickets available at https://www.showclix.com/event/art_latin_america-a-symposium.

Curatorial Gallery Talk: James Oles: Women Artists from Surrealism to Abstraction

Tuesday, February 26

4 p.m., Camilla Chandler and Dorothy Buffum Chandler Gallery and Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Gallery

Women artists have not only formed an essential part of the history of modern Latin American art, they are a specific focus of the Davis Museum's collection, particularly in the areas of Surrealism and abstraction. Join James Oles, Senior Lecturer in Art and Curator of the exhibition *Art_Latin_America: Against the Survey*, for a gallery talk highlighting major works by women artists—including Olga Albizu, Puerto Rico's finest abstract painter, and the German-Venezuelan Gego, whose work is impossible to pigeonhole—who may be less famous than Frida Kahlo, but whose achievements are no less exciting.

Artist Series Talks: *Art_Latin_America: Against the Survey*

Thursdays, February 21, March 7, April 4, April 18, April 25

11:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m., Davis Lobby

This series of five talks includes discussions between James Oles and adjunct exhibitors Claudia Joskowitz, Daniela Rivera, and various artists in the exhibition *Art_Latin_America: Against the Survey* via WebEx and in person.

ABOUT THE DAVIS MUSEUM

One of the oldest and most acclaimed academic fine arts museums in the United States, the Davis Museum is a vital force in the intellectual, pedagogical, and social life of Wellesley College. It seeks to create an environment that encourages visual literacy, inspires new ideas, and fosters involvement with the arts both within the College and the larger community.



Generous Support for the Davis Museum is provided by Massachusetts Cultural Council.

ABOUT WELLESLEY COLLEGE AND THE ARTS

The Wellesley College arts curriculum and the highly acclaimed Davis Museum are integral components of the College's liberal arts education. Departments and programs from across the campus enliven the community with world-class programming—classical and popular music, visual arts, theatre, dance, author readings, symposia, and lectures by some of today's leading artists and creative thinkers—most of which are free and open to the public.

Since 1875, Wellesley College has been the preeminent liberal arts college for women. Known for its intellectual rigor and its remarkable track record for the cultivation of women leaders in every arena, Wellesley—only 12 miles from Boston—is home to some 2,400 undergraduates from 49 states and 58 countries.

Images:

Olga Albizu

(Ponce, Puerto Rico, 1924 – 2005, New York, New York)

Untitled, 1959

Oil on canvas, 22 x 30 in. (55.9 cm x 76.2 cm)

Museum purchase, The Dorothy Johnston Towne (Class of 1923) Fund, 2018.165

Artwork Credit: Courtesy of the artist's estate

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High-resolution images and interviews available upon request.