

## ENCUENTROS



### *Paraguay and its Plastic Arts*

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Lecture by

**Annick Sanjurjo Casciero**

## **IDB CULTURAL CENTER**

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## PARAGUAY AND ITS PLASTIC ARTS

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*Annick Sanjurjo Casciero*

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Paraguay, as one of the Latin American countries of the continent, shares basic aspects of its cultural development with its neighbors. Few others, however, present such a desolate picture of isolation, which appears as a constant in Paraguayan art.

The country's main disadvantage is that it is landlocked. Ideological currents used to arrive on the continent with considerable delay. Those that actually got as far as Paraguay came through Buenos Aires, already transformed by its viewpoint, which is quite different from the Paraguayan spirit. During the second half of this century, this dependency on Argentina faded as Paraguay became increasingly more exposed to Brazilian influences, due primarily to the Itaipú hydro-electric dam built as a joint project by both countries.

Paraguay's history is also desolate, perhaps because it is landlocked. Asunción was founded in 1537, slightly later than the first colonial cities in Peru, and almost at the

same time as Buenos Aires. Nevertheless, during the colonial period Paraguay was not the head but the tail of the Viceroyalty of Peru and later of Río de la Plata.

The dictatorship of José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia came hard on the heels of independence in 1811, and lasted from 1814 to 1840. For almost thirty years Paraguayans were subjected to terror. Literally, no one could enter or leave the country, and all its institutions, including the schools, closed their doors.

The country experienced its greatest disaster between 1865 and 1870 with the War of the Triple Alliance — the alliance of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay against Paraguay. After five years of fighting, the country was buried under corpses and ruins. Its population was reduced by three quarters to mostly women and children, and Asunción, which was not just the capital but the country's only large city, was left with a population of just 24,000.

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In the 20th century, Paraguay fought the Chaco War between 1932 and 1935, this time against Bolivia. Since then the country had gone through great instability, including countless coups d'état, unstable military governments and a bloody civil war in 1947 that lasted for about a year. Finally, General Alfredo Stroessner installed his dictatorship from 1954 to 1989. During his rule of over thirty years, the population was persecuted and lived in fear.

This historical development produced a cultural process that evolved in disjointed pieces. Moreover, since colonial times this process was hindered by the existence of two distinct ethnic elements. The survival of the Guaraní language to this day indicates not only the isolation and lack of mobility in Paraguayan society, but also the co-existence of a cultural dichotomy: two different cultures with different spiritual and moral values, amalgamated to a certain extent, but not fully integrated. The elements of these two cultures are only very rarely and sporadically found together in the country's art.

Asunción society, comprising descendants of the Guaraní indians and a handful of original conquistadors who reached the region, speaks mainly Spanish, although it continues to speak Guaraní. Historically, Asunción was more exposed to cosmopolitan ideas, and always lived fairly well adjusted within Western culture. It is this society that produces and consumes art.

According to official data, there are now about 20,000 Indians, an extremely low figure when compared with the country's population of four million. These ethnically diverse groups do not speak Guaraní or

Spanish, and still live a tribal existence with little interaction with the rest of the population.

The other mestizo population (Guaraní and Spanish) is the one trapped in the countryside. They live with even greater cultural duality since they have lost many of the fundamental values of their original culture, while not wholeheartedly embracing those brought by the conquistadors. Their contribution to the art scene remains scarce and confined to the popular arts, mainly crafts brought by the Spaniards and still produced with the same traditional technique, design and style.

For more than a century, from 1609 to 1767, the Jesuit missions developed an architectural and decorative style known rightly or wrongly as the *Hispano-Guarani Baroque*. But neither they nor the Franciscan workshops that flourished in the 18th century created artistic schools of the calibre of the School of Quito or the School of Lima. Nor did they produce artists in the true sense of the word, since their purpose was to illustrate the catechism, not teach creativity. They taught painters how to copy, and the more exact the copy, the better.

In the hands of the Indians, however, these copies took on a different expressive accent, some of which is still evident in the ceramics displayed here in the Cultural Center's current exhibition, "Other Sensibilities - Recent Developments in the Art of Paraguay" (March, 1994). What we see as disproportion and distortion is probably not regarded as such by the people who make these sculptures. These characteristics, common in any popular art, are found with certain variations, in paintings of

saints and their imagery.

This indicates that Western aesthetic concepts were not and are not viewed in the same way. On the contrary, the repression of creative genius gave rise to fear and embarrassment regarding native culture, and this, aggravated by the lack of other freedoms, is seen in the arts in the form of incomprehensible absences.

It would be necessary to wait until the mid-19th century for a war to bring hidden talents to the surface which, significantly, would make use of elements from the two cultures. In the second half of the 19th century, when the War of the Triple Alliance broke out, the need to inspire patriotism in the soldiers led to the appearance of illustrated newsletters, including one called the *Cabichui* (*Wasp* in Guaraní). Written in Spanish and Guaraní, these papers were generously illustrated with high-quality cartoons that alluded to the war and held the enemy up to ridicule.

Although drawn by different hands, these illustrations present an astonishing unity of concept and composition, balanced in form and space, with a spontaneous and fresh humor, typical of the Criollo.

It is worth noting that the illustrations include animals that are not realistically depicted; they are anthropomorphic personifications that acquire as much life and importance in the drawings as the humans. More than animals, they are symbols imbued with souls, which is how the indigenous people see nature, and why popular speech uses animals to fashion nicknames that precisely reflect their feelings about the personality or physical appearance of a "Christian." For example, *El Gran*

*Bragueta Ovi-Sapi-Geringlo-Tortuguifero Marqués de Cajón e Cachimbo* (The Great Sire Egg-Laying Toad-Like Syringe-Toting Turtle-Riding Marquis of the Box and Pipe) is Luis Alves de Lima e Silva, Duke of Caxias, a Brazilian military man and politician who was very prominent during the war. Caxias is depicted in all these illustrations with the body of a fat toad. Often he is mounted on a turtle rather than a horse, and always carries a syringe as if it were a weapon — maybe in those days the popular expression *jeringa* or *jeringar* already meant to pester constantly.

Another facet worth mentioning is that the spontaneity and humor with which the enemy is treated does not extend to the Paraguayan counterpart. Here there is no freshness or fun, the figures are stiff and false, like the saints in colonial imagery that were imposed by force. This is how fear and repression of feelings are tacitly reflected in the secular art.

In contrast, caricatures by Miguel Acevedo (1889-1915) and others that appear at the beginning of this century, also in a unique type of newsletter, were aimed at Asunción society. Although filled with spontaneity and wit like the drawings from the trenches, the humor is different simply because the spark that ignites the humor comes from a different culture.

It is during this period that, undoubtedly owing to the War of the Triple Alliance, we feel the absence of a generation that could have taken up the work of those humorist illustrators and served as a bridge between popular and fine art, as was the case in Argentina, Mexico, and other Latin American countries. Furthermore, the two

painters who had been sent to study in France prior to the war, suffered or died as a result of it. Saturio Ríos (1845-1927), who had participated in making the trench drawings, was taken prisoner by the Brazilians, and later became the court painter of Pedro II. On his return to Paraguay, he retired to his birthplace in San Lorenzo, and died half mad and in poverty after having destroyed all his pictorial works in a fit of frustration. Aurelio García (1845-1869) died at the end of the war and all that is known of his work are several portraits of Marshal Francisco Solano López.

As an expression with continuity, painting only appears in Paraguay close to the end of the 19th century, in the form of landscapes inspired from abroad. As a genre, landscape appears in Europe in the 17th century, having already existed as background in medieval works. The Jesuits, however, did not include it in their pictorial representations of saints. It appears as background in the portraits of Marshal López by Aurelio García in 1865 and 1866, and some European artists who came to work in Paraguay prior to the War of the Triple Alliance also may have painted landscapes, but their works did not survive the war.

Literally it is thanks to some European painters who came to visit or live after the war, such as the Italian Héctor Da Ponte (1879-1956), that Paraguay sees painting for the first time that does not feature the figure of a saint or an official in the foreground. European landscape painting then became the imposed form of representation — and I stress *imposed* — that takes root in the country, and for several decades it is the only artistic manifestation, with very few changes.

At that time, Asunción society lived a simple life without luxuries, but with comparative economic ease, in a climate of relative freedom and peace. Perhaps because it wanted to forget the harrowing recent past, society was not willing to face problems of misery, violence, or suffering. The uncommitted photographic representation of a beautiful, timeless landscape, became the pictorial ideal. During the sixty years Da Ponte lived in the country, he painted views of Asunción and some pictures of local history and customs. He also painted landscapes in which the human figure, when it appears, is simply a passive element in the composition. The circumscribed environment clearly made it impossible for his painting to evolve beyond his post-romantic academic training.

Later, Pablo Alborno (1872-1958) for example, tried to paint human figures, some of which were excellent, but he also cloistered himself in landscapes where, when a peasant appears, it is in the form of an idealized figure. Alborno was a sensitive artist and a competent professional, and his paintings won prizes abroad, but he forced his brush to obey public taste. He won fame for his pictures of flowering *lapacho* trees painted with post-impressionistic coolness, and until his death the most important figure in his paintings continued to be that brilliantly-colored flowering tree set in an almost transparent atmosphere.

Like Alborno, other artists of merit who had studied in Europe progressed backward rather than forward, and drained their sensibility and talents into picturesque, photographic landscapes. Nevertheless, many of them, like Juan A. Samudio (1878-



1935), were already seeking purely plastic elements, and the omnipresent hut and other compositional details helped to dimly and quietly create a reality that was not always rose-colored.

The Chaco War (1932-1935) forced major changes on life in Asunción. It marked the beginning of the end of the tiny bourgeoisie or oligarchy. With the rise of a small middle class composed of professionals and merchants, a new social conscience appeared which would be reflected in the plastic arts with a more modern vocabulary.

Its birth was not easy, and is well illustrated by the painter Jaime Bestard (1892-1964) who was forced by the Chaco War to return to Paraguay. He left France after nine years of residence, where he had exhibited with the "independent" group of painters in Paris. Although his landscapes have something in common with those of his predecessors, he sought eminently plastic solutions in an attempt to reinterpret, to schematicize, to capture tropical light and colors that would distance him from the merely decorative and picturesque. However, his work was not widely accepted.

In his final productive years, Bestard made some sketches in pencil, watercolor, tempera, and pastels where he gave free rein to his creative imagination as well as his irony and sense of humor, but he did so in secrecy, evidently ashamed of this art. With these sketches of human figures, Bestard anticipated the next generation and achieved a much more modern expression than some artists who subsequently called themselves "modernists." Bestard, however, had been the teacher of many of them, and was

stubbornly opposed to their attempts at innovation. This refusal, in contrast to his "secret sketches," indicates that society had built a wall around the artist's production, and Bestard, trapped between two fires, succumbed externally but not internally to the hermeticism and incomprehension of his milieu.

Coinciding with considerable growth in the population, the urban landscape began to appear, and with it the human figure. A self-taught artist, Ignacio Núñez Soler (1891-1983) was unique because he worked in solitude. With a true artistic vocation, he painted for the sheer pleasure of it. He never sought any recognition and therefore was entirely indifferent to public opinion. With a certain naïvete, he sometimes painted popular urban scenes during the first half of this century, sometimes with "juicy" details, but always with grace and humor. Although he once exhibited in the 1930s, his work was not well received. His reputation did not begin to rise until about twenty years later when a sudden frenzy to build ugly modern buildings sounded the death knell for colonial Asunción. The subsequent nostalgia for the past was only able to rescue a few urban jewels, and the work of Núñez Soler became unintentionally testimonial.

Pedro Di Lascio (1890-1982) also expressed himself in a naïve style, although he was not self-taught. Di Lascio "reconstructed" a typical urban landscape that was on its way to disappearing. I use the word "reconstructed" because his use of vivid and contrasting primary colors placed in defined areas did not correspond to reality, nor did his perspective or composition. Like Núñez Soler, he took his pictorial language

from wherever it suited him, in order to represent a cityscape that seems real to the viewer's eyes, despite the deformations. There are no human figures in his cityscapes and despite their luminosity and airiness, not one door or window is open, nothing permits a glimpse of the interiors of the houses. Once again, we see secretiveness and fierce protection of privacy!

In the 1960s, Michael Burt (b. 1930) painted urban landscapes that are even more unreal. Like Alborno's flowering trees that turned out to be the main characters in the composition, Burt's small buildings shine as the sole protagonists in the paintings. They are surrounded only by light or dark blue, sometimes a categorical black, which makes his simplified, phantasmagorical visions stand out even more, as if these were reincarnations of the past. Despite the brilliant colors that give them life, these paintings also suggest overwhelming solitude.

As a continuation of the popular vein of the wartime engravers, and to some extent of Núñez Soler, rural landscapes appear at the end of the 1950s populated by figures going about their daily tasks. These human figures are not lost in the landscape but form an equally important part of it. A few artists had studied engraving, like Jacinto Rivero (b. 1932) who crafted works that revealed the context in which they were born and raised. Rivero produced expressive recreations of scenes that bring his own Guaraní culture to life.

An artist better able to combine the duality of the Paraguayan spirit, while making a plastic synthesis of popular and fine art elements, is the Brazilian engraver

Livio Abramo (1903-1992). Although in his country he was already known for his pioneering, expressionistic, and socially critical engravings, during his thirty years in Paraguay his expression became calmer and deeper. In his 1950s series *Paraguay*, he recreates the essence of the local landscape. He takes up the simple and severe geometry of the raw woollen cloth used under saddles, woven with colonial designs in black, and goes far beyond the designs in a clearly constructivist style. He recreates Paraguay outside Asunción: the almost inert quietness of its villages, the immobility and timelessness of its straight linear structures, the solitude and silence of its fields. Apart from reflecting the austerity of the saddle blankets, the black and white engravings are a reflection of the temperament of rural Paraguayans.

In contrast to this stillness and structural order, he uses extreme economy in his 1960s series, *Lluvias (Rains)* to portray violence which, for this artist, is another component of Paraguayan life. The torrential rains in Paraguay come suddenly with titanic force. This tension, which for Abramo went beyond the atmospheric phenomenon, is depicted with sharp and penetrating lines that slash and whip out of control.

Significantly, and undoubtedly thanks to Abramo's teaching in Paraguay, engraving began to attract followers while painting lost them. Perhaps this medium, considered less important than painting, did not awaken in the artist, still hesitant and inexperienced, the feelings of insecurity he faced when trying to produce a work of art more in line with the rigors of Western art. On the contrary, it permitted the artist to express his innermost



feelings by making direct use of wood, perhaps a warmer medium than the brush in a heavily forested country.

The recent Brazilian influence brought aesthetic viewpoints seasoned this time with São Paulo spices. The Brazilian Modern Movement of the 1920s owed a great deal to Europe, particularly German Expressionism, and also to Mexico, another great center for spreading culture in Latin America, concerned pictorially with social issues.

Affected by different influences and the guiding philosophy of Josefina Plá who insisted on the need for "art with local themes but universal meaning," Paraguay's first group of artists, *Arte Nuevo* (New Art), appeared in 1953. Its members were trained in Paraguay and for the first time it was the artist — and in this case mainly women — who forced society to accept new plastic parameters.

But what did "art with local themes" mean at that time in Asunción? Not the remote events, not the truncated and dismembered culture trapped in the rural zone, but rather immediate life experiences — the bloody revolution of 1947, political instability, the takeover by General Stroessner, and the suppression of all freedom of expression and individual rights.

As a painter, Edith Jiménez (b. 1921) produced and continues to produce real and imaginary uninhabited landscapes, some in the vein of her teacher, Jaime Bestard. When she includes human figures, they are always women who, in silence and isolation, work to earn their daily bread for their families by washing clothes or selling fruits and vegetables in the market.

When she began, however, to engrave in black and white in the 1960s, her work acquired a different expressivity, and her "landscapes" turn inward to the very core of nature, as can be seen in her series on similar themes such as *Florestas* (Groves), *Troncos* (Tree Trunks) and others. In this latter series, an "inner light" vivifies her composition, but at the same time it illuminates textures that somehow appear as wounds. The effect is heightened, for example, in her woodcut *Los dedos de la madera* (The Fingers of the Wood) where deformed growths appear on the bark, like wounds on a tortured body. This search for the eternal in nature, rather than the ephemeral, is seen again in the 1970s in her engravings of fruit in subtle tonalities.

Olga Blinder (b. 1920) was a co-founder of the *Arte Nuevo* group. Her early paintings smack of social protest in a timid Cubist style. Soon after, she devotes herself entirely to black and white engraving where, without distractions of any kind, she uses a strong expressionism to depict social and political oppression. She presents figures of tortured people shown alone in their agony. In time, these tortured figures would double, and then multiply. Her titles speak for themselves: *Torturado*, *¡Hasta cuándo!*, *Ser* (Tortured, Until When?, To Be). Other times, there are compact figures of women deformed by suffering, which also proliferate over the years, such as in *Inútil espera* (Useless Wait). Her engravings, not her paintings, are testimonials to the existential drama that she and all Paraguayan society was living.

When these artists began to gain expressive force with a vocabulary of their own, another group appeared in 1964, *Los Novisimos (The Very Latest)*. Its members, almost all born in the 1940s, were the product of the dictatorship. Although they opposed it, they were not militants nor were they persecuted. They did not share the social concern or the premise that it was necessary to seek "the essence of being Paraguayan."

Influenced by the "happenings" in the United States and the trends coming out of the Torcuato Di Tella Institute in Buenos Aires, a center of pop art, object art, and action painting, these artists targeted Paraguayan society itself. They spared no effort to assault and offend it, with all the means within their reach. Their "happenings," and informal abstract paintings, never before seen in the country, were made of the most diverse spurts of paint, ink, wax, and mixtures of organic materials, like mango juice. They also incorporated different items such as leather, cloth, sand, sticks, and even fresh fruits that the public ate on the spot.

This extreme aggressiveness did not last long, and by the end of the 1960s the group began to disperse. Those who continued in the plastic arts chose calmer avenues, although their aggression was expressed with images borrowed from neo-figurative art.

The somewhat caricatured images of Fernando Grillón (b. 1931) date from that era. He was not among the founders of the group but often exhibited with them.

At that time, because of Stroessner's dictatorship, a new social class appeared that quickly grew rich and not always through

legitimate means. The "easy money" that came with the construction of the Itaipú dam also led to extremes of extravagance.

By the end of the 1960s, Grillón's humorous caricatures had become more satirical, but it is with Ricardo Migliorisi (b. 1948) that humor turns truly virulent. At the beginning, he used comic strips to label society as cheap, with bad taste, and therefore grotesque. Soon only the irony remains, but he introduces new elements — the fantastic and the absurd. He creates an atmosphere in which everything appears normal at first glance, but the compositional elements are absurd; and at the opposite extreme, the absurdities of the people are made to appear normal. His work depicts unbridled luxury as ludicrous, in a society which has lost all notion of the value of money.

Also in the 1960s, Ricardo Yustman (b. 1942) produces ink drawings of truly fantastic beings, but this time they are aggressive human monsters, tortured and torturers at the same time. They are insatiable cannibals who seek destruction, even in death. In this case, the social and political criticism is concealed by a veil of fantasy to suggest sinister spiritual deformations.

This interplay of reality versus fantasy is accompanied by the representation of another "landscape," perhaps even more intimate and hermetic, in which the human figure is completely absent or only a part of the body appears. The main subject has become a symbol, and loses its intrinsic meaning. Through an almost photographic technique, the object acquires a value that goes far beyond its mere depiction.

In the 1970s, Osvaldo Salerno (b. 1952) and other artists began to print series of engravings where the objects are identically repeated one after the other. This symmetrical repetition represents an order that appears rigid, but at some point a change is introduced into the series, a rupture that ends everything completely.

Instead of representing a series of identical objects, Luis Alberto Boh (b. 1952) faithfully recreates, with painstaking and perfect drawing, images that apparently carry on functions that are their own but that are imposed on another by force. For example, in his series *Del libro de los actos de gobierno del Supremo (From the Record Book of the Government of the Supreme Leader)*, there are hands poised over a document as if reading or writing. However this interpretation is undermined by strings that tie and bind the wrists to the paper, fundamentally changing the meaning of the work.

In the same period, Miguel Heyn (b. 1950) also based his work on this play of contradicting images, which the critic Ticio Escobar calls the "poetics of the equivocal." The protagonists in his painting could be the shell of a sea snail, an egg, a rotting piece of fruit, or even a chicken ready to be roasted, carefully and firmly trussed. They appear alone on a shiny surface that could be fine marble. At first glance, we feel we are simply in the presence of objects that are clearly and exactly rendered under a bright light. Then we realize that the object is misplaced, out of its natural environment, completely alone on something that might be a prisoner's bench, lit by a powerful spotlight that exposes its inner dignity.

Meanwhile, Jenaro Pindú (1946-1993) returns to a very personal landscape. With detailed and careful drawing, he also depicts fantastic, even absurd figures with strange shanty-like dwellings. In an anxious, timeless solitude, in minimal space, these drawings are a veiled representation of the homeland. The constructions are made of disparate elements from past native and foreign civilizations, and are hermetically sealed to protect their privacy, like a fortress that is both unassailable and extremely frail. We see wheels, perhaps the remains of a war tank, sails from ships or Columbus' caravels, the ruins of old houses and modern buildings, all covered by a kind of roof which is not very solid, with protruding towers, antennae, or radar as the only contact with the outside.

In Mabel Arcondo (1940-1976) the fantastic and the absurd become magic and lyrical. In her very personal work, human figures which are simultaneously real and unreal share space with cats, dogs, birds, and "astonished" cows. Although they are realistically depicted with volume and weight, some walk on air with absolute ease.

Enrique Careaga (b. 1944) goes even further by removing his landscapes from an earthly setting. Although he was an original member of the *Los Novisimos* group, he went to Paris in 1966 where he worked and exhibited for several years, mainly with Victor Vasarely. In the 1970s, he began to create space landscapes, perhaps with the hidden hope of creating a perfect world. These "bodies" which the artist calls "spatial-temporal," float weightlessly in a pure and limpid space. Later he depicted a more structured world, where neither

tension nor violence exists. In the *Gran Silencio* (*The Great Silence*) these structures are only illuminated by a white, diaphanous inner light, within a limitless perspective.

I will end with Carlos Colombino (b. 1937) since his long career is a synthesis of the different stages in Paraguayan art since 1954. Although he identified with the *Arte Nuevo* group from the outset, he always continued to be faithful to himself. His first major works appear in the 1950s with plantscapes. He calls them "xylo-paintings" because he uses the woodcut technique, although they are finished works whose expressiveness depends a great deal on the natural grain of the wood he is carving. Like Edith Jiménez, these paintings portray tensions that come from wounds, ruptures that stem from the heart of the wood, that reach into it.

Coinciding with the caustic figures of the 1960s, plants gave way to humans in the fibers of the wood, and Colombino begins a series of works that lie between expressionism and neo-figurative art. He uses them to make a savage criticism of the government. A few descriptive titles are: *Los generales*, *Los constituyentes*, *El cardenal*, *Los capangas* (*The Generals*, *The Constituents*, *The Cardinal*, *The Henchmen*). This last work received the Grand Prize at the Quito Biennial in 1968.

In the 1970s, he returned to realistic figures, based on the work the 15th century German draftsman, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). In his series *Reflexiones sobre Durero* (*Reflections on Dürer*), the artist achieves full maturity, while simultaneously

illustrating his surroundings with the "poetics of the equivocal."

With an economy of elements, again playing with the textures of wood, Colombino encloses a world with strict and rigid lines, where the freedom of the sinuous curve is completely absent. This impersonal world, dignified in its simplicity, is irretrievably bound, repeatedly assaulted, violated, and beheaded. There is beauty in this work, but also hermeticism, silence, anguish, and solitude.

Despite its failings, isolation, cultural duality, and backwardness, Paraguay is no longer an unknown land. With landscapes that are picturesque, urban, human, or vegetable, even in "object" landscapes, the artist reaches his/her own essence. From there he/she speaks, or remains silent, which is also a way of expressing oneself, thus becoming a part of the modern art movement of the continent. Now more than ever before, Paraguay has new doors opening before it, and in time artists will doubtless walk through them with honor and dignity.



## ARTISTS

**ABRAMO**, Livio. (Brazil 1903, Asunción 1992). Engraver who moved to Asunción in 1962. Performed outstanding work in the field of plastic arts in Paraguay and was literally the creator of modern engraving in the country. Co-founder of the Julián de la Herrería Engraving School, Asunción. Exhibited in major cities in Europe, Latin America, the United States, and Asia. Main awards: Best Brazilian Engraver's Prize, São Paulo Biennial, 1953; Special Gallery Prize, São Paulo Biennial, 1961.

**ACEVEDO**, Miguel. (Asunción, 1889-1915). Self-taught draftsman, caricaturist, journalist. Produced caricatures for newspapers and magazines in Asunción. Created his own magazine *Tipos y Tipetes* in 1907, which he wrote and illustrated himself, copies of which were passed from hand to hand and finally returned to the artist. He held a one-man show of his caricatures in Asunción in 1913.

**ALBORNO**, Pablo. (Asunción, 1872-1958). Painter, decorator, set designer. Studied in Montevideo, Asunción, Rome, and Venice. Teacher of drawing and painting; co-founder of the country's first private academy and first permanent art gallery. Published books on Paraguayan Colonial art. Exhibited in Paraguay, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, and the United States. Main awards: Study Grant from the Italian Government, 1903-1909; Bronze Medal, International Exhibition to mark Argentina's Centennial, Buenos Aires, 1910.

**ARCONDO**, Mabel. (Asunción, 1940-1976). Painter. Studied drawing and painting; exhibited in Asunción.

**BESTARD**, Jaime. (Asunción, 1892-1964). Painter, draftsman, sculptor, writer. Studied in Asunción. Lived in Paris 1922-1933 and worked for academies, schools, and museums. Co-founder of the Salón de Primavera; teacher of drawing and painting; writer of plays, one of which was translated and performed in Guaraní, one novel, and many articles on art. Exhibited in Paraguay, Argentina, France, the United States, and Spain.

**BLINDER**, Olga. (Asunción, 1921). Painter, engraver, muralist, teacher. Studied in Asunción. Has worked tirelessly in the field of art and held major teaching posts. Co-founder of the group *Arte Nuevo*, 1954. Author and co-author of many publications on art and pedagogy. Exhibited in Paraguay and other Latin American, European, and Asian countries. Main awards: Study grant, U.S. State Department, 1970; Order of Rio Branco, Brazilian Government, 1973; Honorable Mention, Liga Paraguaya de los Derechos de la Mujer, 1980.



**BOH**, Luis Alberto. (Asunción, 1952). Draftsman, illustrator. Studied in the Faculty of Architecture at the National University in Asunción. Exhibited in Paraguay, United States, Spain, Uruguay, Brazil, and Colombia. Main awards: First Prize, Professional Category, Benson & Hedges Competition, Asunción, 1982.

**BURT**, Michael. (Asunción, 1931). Painter, potter, sculptor, architect. Studied in New York and Rio de Janeiro. Lived in New York and Curitiba. Professor at the National University in Asunción. Co-founder and director of the Museo de Arte Moderno in Asunción (demolished). Exhibited in Paraguay and other Latin American and European countries. Main awards: Study grant, U. S. State Department, 1966; Silver Medal, Salón del Automóvil Club, Rio de Janeiro, 1975.

**CAREAGA**, Enrique. (Asunción, 1944). Painter. Studied art and architecture in Asunción and the integration of art and architecture. Studio of Victor Vasarely in Paris, 1966-1978. Exhibited in Asunción and other cities in Latin America, Europe including Italy, and the United States. Main awards: various national prizes; Gold Medal, Biennial of Cordoba, Argentina, 1966; International Sports Biennial, Montevideo, 1989.

**COLOMBINO**, Carlos. (Concepción, 1937). Painter, engraver, sculptor, architect. Initially self-taught, studied later in Madrid and Paris. Actively involved in promoting the arts in the country. Co-founder of the Museo del Barro and the Museo Paraguayo de Arte Contemporáneo. Exhibited in Asunción and other cities in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Main awards: Study grant, Spanish Government, 1964; French Government, 1968; Study grant, U.S. State Department, 1966; various national prizes; Prize for Painting, Contemporary Art in America and Spain, Madrid, 1963; Grand Prize, First Quito Biennial, 1968.

**DA PONTE**, Héctor. (Italy, 1879, Asunción, 1956). Painter. Studied in Italy. Enthusiastic promoter of the arts through multiple activities and teaching. Co-founder of the Art Academy of the Instituto Paraguayo and organizer of the first Salón de Bellas Artes, Asunción, 1899. Exhibited in Asunción and international exhibitions.

**DILASCIO**, Pedro. (Asunción, 1908-1977). Painter, engraver. Studied in Asunción. Co-founder of the Museo de Arte Moderno, Asunción, 1965. Exhibited in Asunción and at international exhibitions in Latin America and Spain. Main awards: First Prize for Painting (tied), Centro Cultural Paraguayo-Americano, Asunción, 1964; Mention, International Exhibition, Monaco, 1965; Honorable Mention, Engraving Biennial, Santiago, Chile, 1970.

**GARCIA**, Aurelio. (1845-1869). With Saturio Ríos, considered to be the first Paraguayan painter. Studied in Asunción and Paris. Painted portraits of Marshal Francisco Solano López. Awards: Study grant, Paraguayan Government, ca. 1859-1863.



**GRILLON**, Fernando. (Asunción, 1931). Self-taught painter, engraver, draftsman. Study trips to Latin America, Europe, and the East. Exhibited in Asunción and other cities in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Main awards: Gold Medal, International Biennial of Graphic Art, Florence, 1970; Acquisition Prize (tied), Coltejer Biennial, Medellín, Colombia, 1972.

**HEYN**, Miguel. (Asunción, 1950). Draftsman, engraver, painter. Studied painting and engraving in Asunción and metal engraving with Argentinian artists. Exhibited in Asunción and other cities in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Main awards: Prize, Maldonado Biennial, Uruguay, 1980; First Prize, Professional Category, Benson & Hedges Competition, Asunción, 1983.

**JIMENEZ**, Edith. (Asunción, 1925). Painter, draftsman, engraver. Studied in Asunción and São Paulo. Teacher of engraving and director of an engraving school for children; member of the group *Arte Nuevo*; founding member of the Museo de Arte Moderno, 1965. Exhibited in Asunción (in 1960 held the first one-woman show of engravings by a national artist) and in other cities in Latin America, the United States, Europe, and Japan. Main awards: Study grant, Brazilian Government 1958-1960; Study grant, U. S. State Department, 1965; Gold Medal, First Latin American Woodcut Competition, Buenos Aires, 1960; Honorable Mention, São Paulo Biennial, 1961, 1965, and the Santiago de Chile Biennial, 1963; First Prize in Painting (tied), Centro Cultural Paraguayo-Americano, Asunción, 1964.

**MIGLIORISI**, Ricardo. (Asunción, 1948). Draftsman, illustrator, and painter. Studied in Asunción. Worked as an illustrator and founded the Salgar School in Barranquilla, Colombia. Moved to Bogotá in 1966. Exhibited in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Main awards: First Prize, Professional Category, Benson & Hedges Competition, Asunción, 1982.

**NUÑEZ SOLER**, Ignacio. (Asunción, 1891-1983). Self-taught, worked as a painter from 1920. Exhibited in Asunción and at international exhibitions starting in 1931.

**PINDU**, Jenaro. (Henaro Espínola, Asunción, 1946-1993). Draftsman, architect. Exhibited in Asunción and other cities in Latin America and the United States. Main awards: First Prize, Maldonado Biennial, Uruguay, 1979.

**PLÁ**, Josefina. (Canary Islands, 1909). Engraver (uses the pseudonym Abel de la Cruz), sculptor, potter, muralist, writer, art critic. Has lived in Paraguay since 1927. Studied pottery in Spain and with her husband, the Paraguayan artist Andrés Campos Cervera. A multi-faceted personality with clear ideas, she was always at the head of fresh cultural movements in literature and the plastic arts in her capacity as teacher and artist. Founder of the group *Arte Nuevo* that gave new impetus to the arts in the country. Author of many books of poetry, short stories, plays, critical and historical studies of Paraguayan plastic arts, crafts, and literature. Exhibited

in Asunción and other cities in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Main awards: Arno Prize, São Paulo Biennial, 1957; First Prize, Mural Competition, Asunción, 1957.

**RIOS**, Saturio. (San Lorenzo, 1845-1927). Painter, engraver, and draftsman. Studied in Asunción, Brazil, and Paris. Telegraph operator and officer in the Paraguayan army during the War of the Triple Alliance. During the war, painted a portrait of Bishop Palacios at the Humaitá Camp, 1865, in earth tones, as done in the Jesuit missions. Made engravings for the newsletters read in the trenches. Taken prisoner by the Brazilians, was court painter of Pedro II. On his return to Paraguay was elected to the House of Congress. Withdrew from the world to San Lorenzo, burned his works and died half mad in abject poverty. Awards: Study grant to Paris, Paraguayan Government, ca. 1859-1863.

**RIVERO**, Jacinto. (Asunción, 1932). Engraver, painter. Studied engraving in Asunción. Exhibited in Asunción and other cities in Latin America and Europe. Main awards: Mention, Ministry of Education; Silver Medal, Brazilian Designers Confederation, Brazil, 1978.

**SALERNO**, Osvaldo. (Asunción, 1952). Designer, painter, engraver, architect. Studied in Asunción and Buenos Aires. Founded the Museo del Barro in 1980 and has been a teacher at the Visual Arts Center School, both in Asunción. Exhibited in Paraguay and abroad. Main awards: First Prize for Painting, Hispanidad 77, Asunción, 1978; Honorable Mention, First Biennial of Artworks on Paper, Buenos Aires, 1987; First Prize for Painting, Ahorros Paraguayos, Asunción, 1988.

**SAMUDIO**, Juan A. (Asunción, 1878-1935). Painter. Studied in Asunción and Rome. Teacher of drawing and painting, co-founder of the country's first private academy and first permanent art gallery. Exhibited in Asunción, Rome, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro. Main awards: Study grant, Italian Government 1903-1909; Silver Medal, International Exhibition to mark Argentina's Centenary, Buenos Aires, 1910.

**YUSTMAN**, Ricardo. (Argentina, 1942). Self-taught painter living in Paraguay since 1950 where he studied architecture. Exhibited in national and international exhibitions. Main awards: Prize, First Montevideo Biennial, 1970.

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**Annick Sanjurjo Casciero** (Asunción, Paraguay, 1934 ) has distinguished herself as a promoter of Latin American plastic arts. During the 1960s she taught French language and literature, and Paraguayan and Latin American literature at the Universidad Nacional and the Universidad Católica in Asunción. In recent decades she has worked with the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, establishing links with Latin American museums. She is a former editor of the books and art sections of the magazine *Américas*, and archivist with the Art Museum of the Americas (OAS). She has published numerous articles and produced various audiovisual materials on art and artists of the Americas. She is co-author of the only guide in Spanish to Washington, D.C., *Washington D.C. en español*, and in 1993 edited the historic publication *Contemporary Latin American Artists: Exhibitions at the Organization of American States, 1965-1985, Vol. I*; and in 1997, *Vol. II, 1941-1964*.

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