

To coincide with two museum exhibitions of Joaquín Torres-García's work; "Constructing Abstraction with Wood" at the Menil, and "Joaquín Torres-García: Houston collections" at the MFAH, Sicardi Gallery presents "Constructivism in Relief: Taller Torres-García," an exhibition of wood constructions, reliefs and related paintings and drawings by artists of the Taller Torres-García.

In 1934, Torres-García returned to Uruguay after 43 years spent abroad. Over the next decade, as painter and sculptor, writer, teacher and visionary, he forged one of the most important avant-garde movements in the Americas, one that drew on both European modernism, especially Constructivism, and pre-Columbian aesthetic traditions. In 1943, he founded a Taller, or workshop, in Montevideo; within this dynamic setting several younger artists found their own artistic vision inspired by Torres-García's theories.



## Constructivism in Relief: Taller Torres García September 17 - October 24, 2009



Torres-García once wrote that for the artist, "the real muse is the material itself." This exhibition explores the varied use of wood in the art produced in the Taller. Wood was embraced for its inherent flatness, which embodied Torres-García's emphasis on planar surfaces rather than illusions of depth. By sawing, nailing, scoring, assembling and painting pieces of wood, artists in the Taller literally and figuratively "constructed" a new modern art.

There are few forests in Uruguay, making wood relatively expensive; in part, this explains why many of the works in the show were made with discarded boards, their rough surfaces left intact, thickly painted, or coarsely assembled with nails. Yet in most of these works, such humble materials are redeemed by sensitivity to line and form, a concern for perfect proportions, and a subtle use of color.

"Constructivism in Relief: Taller Torres-García" includes 22 works dating from 1945 to 2003 by the leading figures to emerge from the Taller: Julio Alpuy, Gonzalo Fonseca, Jose Gurvich, Francisco Matto, Manuel Pailós, Alceo Ribeiro, and Augusto Torres. Their works reveal how wood and cardboard could, indeed, provide a source of inspiration.