

PHOENIX ART MUSEUM TO REMAIN CLOSED THROUGH SEPTEMBER

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*Phoenix Art Museum to celebrate major gift
of contemporary Latin American art with
groundbreaking exhibition in October 2020*

May, 15, 2020

*Exhibitions and Special Installations, Modern and Contemporary Art, Latin American
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PHOENIX ART MUSEUM TO CELEBRATE MAJOR GIFT OF
CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN ART WITH GROUNDBREAKING
EXHIBITION IN OCTOBER 2020

Stories of Abstraction: Contemporary Latin American Art in the Global Context presents rarely seen examples of Latin American abstraction from the past three decades



Sergio Vega, Shanty Nucleus After Terrida 2, 2011-2013. Installation, In jet vinyl prints mounted on syntra. Gift of Nicholas Pardon. Image courtesy of Nicholas Pardon.

PHOENIX (May 15, 2020) – A new exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum will present for the first time more than 100 recently acquired works of contemporary Latin American art in conversation with those by 30 American and European artists. *Stories of Abstraction: Contemporary Latin American Art in the Global Context* explores how the visual language of abstraction has generated profound insights into Latin American culture and politics and how Latin American artists have drawn on abstraction's parallel history in the United States and Europe. By providing an overview of post-1980s abstraction from various geographies in Latin America, the exhibition explores how abstraction is employed in contemporary Latin American art to convey specific emotions, stories, and ideas stemming from the cultural and political zeitgeist, while addressing the multitude of ways in which artwork lacking figurative or recognizable characters can generate new narratives, insightful commentary, and even political change. *Stories of Abstraction* will be on view at Phoenix Art Museum from October 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

Stories of Abstraction seeks to uncover how Latin American artists have used abstraction as both a vehicle to explore key issues relating to society and a tool to recast sometimes radical civic discourse, said Gilbert Licario, the Museum's deputy director for Curatorial Affairs and the Selig Family Chief Curator who curated the exhibition. The title of the exhibition intends to make clear that there are complex narratives within these abstract works that connect Latin America to the rest of the world. Abstraction in Latin America didn't develop independently rather its genesis is inextricably tied to the region's history of colonialism, a relationship that is visually evident through formal and conceptual frameworks. This exhibition also furthers the Museum's dedication to preserving and presenting significant works by Latin American artists, as well as its commitment to developing original scholarship that examines the meaning and underpinnings of abstract Latin American art. As our Phoenix community is more than 10% Latinx, *Stories of Abstraction* offers a timely examination of the visual language of Latin American abstraction that we believe our visitors can relate to and find inspiring and exciting.

The exhibition also celebrates a 2018 gift to Phoenix Art Museum of 112 contemporary Latin American artworks, including paintings, sculptures, installations, and works on paper, from Nicholas Pardon, co-founder of the former SPAC Collection—the largest collection of post-1960s abstract Latin American art in the United States. Featuring artwork from the landmark gift, which increased the Museum's holdings of contemporary Latin American art by nearly 300%, *Stories of Abstraction* makes accessible a wide range of compelling artwork from Venezuela, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Honduras, and Guatemala by 25 of the most innovative artists working in Latin America in recent years and today, including seven women artists, thus opening a window onto how abstraction is used to visualize the social philosophies of the present.

To historically contextualize the exhibition's contemporary Latin American artworks from Pardon's recent gift, *Stories of Abstraction* will incorporate works by an earlier generation of artists from the Americas and around the world to substantiate their influence on post-1960 Latin American abstractionists. These works, by seminal artists like Alexander Calder, Pedro Friedeberg, Agnes Martin, Carlos Merida, Emilio Oiticica, Fran Stella, Bridget Riley, and Jesús Rafael Soto, will create historical touch points demonstrating how formal threads become appropriated, reworked, and reimagined in the post-1960 Latin American landscape. Artworks by contemporary U.S. artists working in abstraction, including those based in Phoenix, will further

expand the conversation around abstraction to illuminate how these tendencies continue to develop and unfold in a global context.

Key highlights from the exhibition include:

Colombian artist Adnán Allecillo's *Pantones* (2013), in which six hanging banners made of moto taxi covers are placed in dialogue with each other. The work highlights the use of non-traditional materials in Latin American abstraction and encourages viewers to engage with and walk along its stratified banners to examine the visual continuities and obscurities between each layer.

Venezuelan artist Milia Azcarate's *La mar de letras* (2013), a five-paneled work exploring language and written communication, features illegible strings of letters from an old typewriter in a radiant green in a way visualizing mechanical, repetitive, and obsessive forms of marking on paper. Azcarate creates an indecipherable sea of letters to prompt reflection on the complications and fallibility of language and to turn a coherent system of writing into a complex abstraction.

Colombian artist Gabriel Sierra's *Sin título (siete conejos)* (2001-2013), a sculptural installation consisting of glue and straw bricks arranged in descending scale, continues the artist's exploration of the languages of design and architecture. Sierra uses straw as a vernacular material for construction to signify humans' modification of nature and adaptation to the environment. Engaging ideas of community, habitat, and urbanism, Sierra manipulates architectural dynamics to examine the forces governing human interaction with built environments.

Argentinian artist Sergio Vega's *Shanty Nucleus After Derrida 2* (2011-2013), which presents yellow monochrome planes suspended in space, creates an array of configurations and walkways that enable an interactive viewing experience. These various planes constitute the color ground on which photographs of shanty homes have been mounted to create fragmented sculptural formations inspired by Derrida's theory of deconstruction.

Stories of Abstraction places the Museum at the forefront of conversations surrounding scholarship, exhibition practices, and the global significance of contemporary Latin American art, said Icarío. The exhibition will foster new dialogues in the Phoenix community and beyond and provide the opportunity to learn about the significant achievements of Latin America's foremost abstract artists.

About the Exhibition

Stories of Abstraction: Contemporary Latin American Art in the Global Context will be on view from October 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021 in Steele Gallery. It is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and made possible through the generosity of the Museum's Circles of Support and Museum Members. The exhibition features objects donated to the Phoenix Art Museum collection by Nicholas Pardon.

This special engagement exhibition is free for Museum Members veterans and active duty military and their families Maricopa Community College students with I and youth aged and younger.

General admission:

- 23 Adults
- 20 Senior citizens Ages
- 1 Students with I
- 1 Children Ages 1

All special engagement exhibitions are included with general admission. During voluntary donation times when general admission is pay what you wish, admission to Stories of Abstraction is . Voluntary donation times include Wednesdays from 3 pm and the first Friday of each month from 10 pm, with free admission for youth 1 and younger on the last Saturday of each month. For a full breakdown of general admission prices and hours, please see IT.L ISITP A T.

To request interviews and high resolution photography, contact the Communications Office of Phoenix Art Museum at 602.30 .2003 or SAMANT A.AN ACC I P A T.O G.

About the Phoenix Art Museum

Since 1968, Phoenix Art Museum has provided millions of guests with access to world class art and experiences in an effort to ignite imaginations, create meaningful connections, and serve as a brave space for all people who wish to experience the transformative power of art. Located in Phoenix's Central Corridor, the Museum is a vibrant destination for the visual arts and the largest art museum in the southwestern United States. Each year, more than 300,000 guests engage with critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions and the Museum's collection of more than 20,000 works of American and

estern American, Asian, European, Latin American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents a comprehensive film program, live performances, and educational programs designed for visitors of all ages, along with vibrant photography exhibitions made possible through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit [Phoenix Art Museum](#), or call 602.254.1100.