

José Rosabal

À la Recherche du Temps Perdu

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Recherche du Temps Perdu

du À la Recherche

Gestalt Light
(À la Recherche du Temps Perdu) 2015-2016
Industrial acrylic on wood panels
84 x 144 in (213 x 427 cm)



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Texts by: **Carla Stellweg / Rafael DiazCasas**

José Angel Rosabal: Traversing the Many Worlds of Abstraction

Ever since the landmark 2004 exhibition “Inverted Utopias” at the Museum of Fine Art, Houston, there has been a radical change in focus, away from Mexico and the “south of the border magic realism” that gained its historic relevance and staunch followers in the 1940s and continued long after. Instead, there has been an evident increase of academic interest in and commercial demand for Latin American abstraction – a multilayered, complex and too-often overgeneralized subject that, while previously overlooked by the Western canon, still remains underexplored today. This shift in focus, interest and attention is coupled with an influx of international exhibitions, biennales and other major venues [such as Documenta and Manifesta] that have featured Latin American artists, hemispheric Latin American art fairs and Latin American curatorial departments at the Tate (London), MoMA, the Guggenheim and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York along with record-breaking sales of Latin American art in twice-a-year major auctions. The rise in visibility combined with media marketing undoubtedly goes hand-in-hand with factors of globalization, capital, changes in demographics and what has been defined as emerging markets around the world.

Aside from abstraction in its many facets, one country that has seen a revival of interest is Cuba, which with the recent passing of Fidel Castro alongside former U.S. President Barack Obama’s diplomatic opening to the island, has been in the news nonstop, in publications and in films around the world. At this moment, it remains to be seen how the “opening” will develop during the Trump administration. Still, it is no wonder that now more than ever a concerted effort has been made on all fronts to also include and focus on Cuban abstract painting and its major players in the international art scene. One such movement that has



Catalog exhibition at Matanzas Public Library, January 1960.

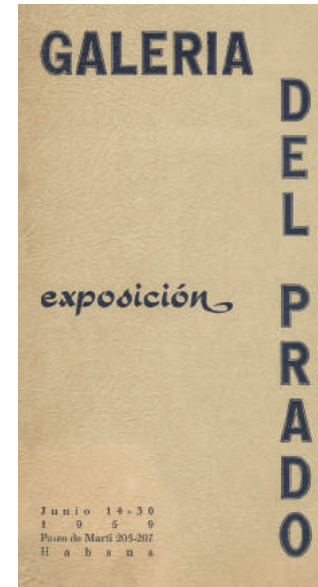
as of late been brought to light, although it has been well-known for those versed in Cuban abstraction yet little known among those scholars that have contributed to the discourse of international abstraction, is a group of artists who came to be known as Diez Pintores Concretos (Ten Concrete Painters) and who deserve to acquire their place within the transatlantic avant-garde movements.

One artist within that group whose work was under the radar in the context of the international avant-garde, and has now been reintroduced to a larger audience including the marketplace, is José Rosabal (b. 1935). His first solo exhibition in Miami at the Latin Core Gallery is therefore aptly titled *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (In Search of Lost Time).

First, it is time to unearth and place Rosabal in the context of Cuba and the Cuban avant-garde modernist movement by reviewing his singular work outside of the usual group format that covered three generations, of which many chapters are still open to reconsideration and a repositioning within the specificity of the manifold interpretations of abstraction awaiting to recover “lost time.” The first movement started in 1927 and ran through 1938, during which most artists flocked to Paris and hence were influenced by the great European modernist movements of the time.

This First Generation of Modernists influenced Rosabal as well as all subsequent generations and he even formed a relationship with artists such as Víctor Manuel [García Valdés] (1897-1969) and Eduardo Abela (1998-1965), both of which also attended the Academia Nacional de Bellas San Alejandro albeit decades earlier. In addition, Mariano Rodríguez (1912-1990), a prominent figure of the Second Modernist Generation that roughly lasted from 1938 to the 1950s, inspired Rosabal’s work as well. This Second Generation, instead of being drawn to Paris, looked to Mexico where during WWII Surrealism was celebrating a renaissance, with André Breton (1896-1966) and Wolfgang Paalen (1905-1959) respectively arriving in Mexico between 1938 and 1939, followed by Leonora Carrington and Kati Horna. Next to New World Surrealism Mexico’s agrarian revolutionary government sanctioned a huge nationwide modern mural program. Meanwhile and already from around 1928-1937, trading and cultural ties between Cuba and Mexico were extensive and continued to grow.

Rosabal’s first exhibition was in 1959 at the Galería del Prado, Havana,



Rosabal first solo exhibition catalog, Havana 1959.

established in 1942 by the prominent María Luisa Gómez Mena along with her husband, Mario Carreño, who later became a concrete painter that bonded with a few members of Diez Pintores Concretos. Another important figure involved in the opening of the Galería del Prado was the influential Cuban Art Historian, Critic and Curator, José Gomez-Sicre, who served as an advisor to Alfred H. Barr Jr. and, with Gómez Mena, helped organize the seminal 1944 MoMA exhibition *Modern Cuban Painters*, which traveled across the United States for the next two years and is considered by many to have been the beginning of U.S. Cold War cultural policies.

The works Rosabal showed in Galería del Prado clearly demonstrate the multiple overlaps of Surrealism and Abstraction, which also occurred in New York’s wartime Abstract Expressionism circles where with the arrival of European artists such as Roberto Matta (1911-2002), Arshile Gorky (1904-1948) and Willem De Kooning (1904-1997) witnessed a merging of the surreal, the subconscious and abstraction. Surrealist’s methods of automatism to bring out the subconscious ideally fitted the post-war mood of angst and trauma during the 1940s. Surrealism opened up the way by which to attempt a nationalist essence both in Mexico and Cuba, introducing subconscious elements that could be interpreted as ‘Cubanidad’ or ‘Mexicanidad’. However, during the 1950s, Rosabal, as part of a group of younger upstarts, was breaking away and sought to do everything differently from previous generations, a sort of avant-la-lettre “Generación de la Ruptura”.

The artists in these new groups were no longer interested in defining the essence of what was “Cuban” in a nationalist vocabulary, whether surrealist or not, and instead carried the avant-garde spirit forward by building on the momentum of abstraction in Cuba. One such group was Los Once (The Eleven), who – inspired by Tachisme, Informalism, Lyrical Abstraction, Abstract Expressionism and Geometric or Concretism – advanced abstraction through a series of exhibitions that functioned in opposition to the Batista dictatorship, from 1953 until 1955.

Following and somewhat intersecting with Los Once was the diverse group of multigenerational artists who formed in 1958 under the name Diez

Pintores Concretos, and quickly positioned themselves as the final and strongest moment of the Vanguardia Cubana prior to Castro’s Revolution of 1959. Although called “Diez Pintores Concretos,” there were actually eleven members throughout the course of the group: Pedro Álvarez, Wilfredo Arcay, Salvador Corratgé, Sandú Darié, Luis Martínez Pedro, Alberto Menocal, José Mijares, Pedro de Oraá, Dolores (Loló) Soldevilla, Rafael Soriano and later José Ángel Rosabal.

Loló Soldevilla was the main figure in the formation of Diez Pintores Concretos. After serving as Cuba’s cultural attaché in Paris, she returned to the island in 1956. A trip to Venezuela with her new partner, Pedro de Oraá, followed; back in Havana, she started Galería Color-Luz (Color-Light) in 1957, around which the group assembled.

Like Soldevilla and de Oraá, other Diez Pintores Concretos artists such as Wilfredo Arcay, Romanian-born Sandú Darié and Martínez Pedro had also traveled and spent significant time abroad, absorbing and bringing back with them crucial information on the European avant-garde, namely Neo-Plasticism, Madi and Geometric Abstraction. Still with all the various esthetics of abstraction, the Cuban school of Concretismo that Rosabal is a part of can today be better described as Non-Objective Art, a style that helped to further the evolution of Hard-Edge Cuban abstraction in the 1950s, away from the romanticism of Abstract Expressionism and hence Surrealism. Additionally, those artists who were not able to travel, like Rosabal until he left Cuba in 1968, turned to books and international art magazines like *ArtNews*, *Art d’Aujourd’hui*, *Art in America* and *Duomo* to pick up the latest and study the work of influential artists such as Jean Dewasne (1921 -1999), Ellsworth Kelly (1923 -2015) and Serge Poliakoff (1900-1969).



Color Luz Gallery, Havana 1958.

In a recent interview with the gallerist Lucas Zwirner, de Oraá stated, "...if there is anything that we ever wanted, it was to contribute something to the already established world of Concrete Abstraction." Besides the challenge as described by de Oraá, Cuban Concretismo, as elsewhere throughout Latin America, took interpretive liberties with historical Concrete art, in order to formulate its own version of the "non-objective" rather than adhere to previous European 1930s movements. Also one must question that the artists' sole concern was to become part of an international niche considering the political and social context in 1950s Cuba, rife with disorder and corruption following the 1952 Batista coup. While there was definitely an aspiration to arrive at an "art for art's sake," Cuban concrete painters and those who followed were inextricably, whether willingly or unwillingly, involved and engaged in the political turmoil of the island at that time. Diez Pintores Concretos did after all claim to consider their work as a means of social transformation, albeit through bold colors, hard edges, geometric forms and non-objective compositions. De Oraá's statement therefore does not refer to simply attempting to claim a rightful position within the international abstraction movement, but also to an opportunity to bring about a new, universal and utopian visual language, removed from national identity connotations, ultimately reflecting the cosmopolitan character and urbanization of Havana in stark contrast to the inequities and social conditions during the Batista dictatorship. One cannot help but draw parallels between this brief but promising period of artistic exploration in Cuba and the revolutionary spirit of the Russian avant-garde. For instance, just as Malevich laid the foundation for Suprematism in 1915, right before the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the movement's spiritual tenet eventually clashed with the Soviet Union-sponsored Social Realism, so too did Diez Pintores Concretos group find themselves facing a state wherein, as it established itself after the Cuban Revolution in 1959, artistic freedom would slowly but surely be dictated by the government's cultural policy favoring Social Realism. Already in April of 1958, the highly regarded Marxist intellectual, Juan Marinello, who helped found the Cuban Communist Party, published the essay "*Conversación con nuestros pintores abstractos*" in the Cuban Journal Mensaje (Message), which advocated against abstract art (and more broadly modern art).

Following their inaugural exhibition at Galeria Color-Luz in November of 1959, only months after the Revolution, Diez Pintores Concretos continued to produce work together as a group only until 1961 when

their aesthetics as a whole were considered "out of touch with society". While their work was never directly censored, it was clear through the lack of promotion by the new state that abstraction in whatever shape or form was out of tune with the new dialectic wave. In addition, not only were open debates emerging regarding abstraction's relevance, as opposed to the rising educational figurative forms of art for the masses, but there was also the creation of a Consejo Nacional de Cultura (National Council of Culture) and *Union Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba* – UNEAC – (Writers and Artists Cuban National Union), led by relevant members of the old Communist party, as further proof of the totalitarianism to come. From the 1940s onward, Latin American nations where abstract and concrete art emerged, such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela, were all ruled by either military dictators, populist agendas or coups d'états, displaying a complex panorama of social and political turmoil opposing any sort of utopian vision as envisioned by the artists. Similarly in Cuba by the mid-60s, many artists who were committed to concrete abstraction emigrated elsewhere to continue their careers without compromise. One such artist to leave the island, seeing where abstraction was headed in Cuba's new society, was Rosabal, who in 1968 left for New York City where he remains and works to this day.

Although the youngest and last member to join Diez Pintores Concretos in 1960, Rosabal quickly developed a mature style and solid artistic position on the island after graduating from the San Alejandro Academy in 1959. His unique predisposition to extremely minimal geometric forms, particularly in relation to the other artists in the group, is apparent in his 1961 Untitled print [included in Latin Art Core's Rosabal: A la Recherché du Temps Perdu], originally created for the lithographic portfolio 7 Pintores Concretos and exhibited as part of the First National Congress of Cuban Writers and Artists (1961), which would be the last time the remaining members of Diez Pintores Concretos would ever show together as a group. Grabado 1961 – Foto Congreso 1961 The subtractive Hard-Edge composition of this piece, combined with the subdued palette, exemplified Rosabal's artistic distinctiveness while simultaneously demonstrating the cohesive aesthetic concerns that Diez Pintores Concretos defended since its inception. By 1962, Rosabal was exploring engraving techniques and became a member of Taller Experimental de Gráfica (Graphic Experimental Workshop), an opportunity that allowed him to show in the Workshop's annual exhibitions until his move to the U.S. While perfecting this new



Untitled, 1962. Diptych, Acrylic on masonite.

(2015-16), comprising of a symphony of shapes and colors that seem to dance across the 7 x 14 foot multi-panel 'stage' it is painted on.

By the time Rosabal arrived in New York City, Minimalism was moving to the forefront, slowly replacing the previously prevalent mode of Abstract Expressionism, which various scholars of the New York School as mentioned earlier first linked to Surrealism – especially work by artists such as Matta, Gorky, de Kooning or Wifredo Lam (1902-1982) – however later confirmed Abstract Expressionism's connection to U.S. Cold War cultural policies. The fact that modern art was promoted and secretly sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency as a vehicle in the propaganda war with the Soviet Union exemplifies that even in the United States during the Cold War, the government was in a sense favoring while censoring particular art movements just as other governments and dictators did abroad. Regardless

medium, Rosabal continued his exploration in concrete art, still showing an affinity for angular geometry and shapes paired with flat faceted planes of monochromatic hues and colors, as seen in the other early work within this exhibition: Untitled (1962). When looking at this small-scale piece, as well as the aforementioned print, alongside the artist's recent works, infused with refined rigid verticality and rectilinearity, it is clear that throughout the decades Rosabal has remained committed to studying the possibilities and intricacies of form, color and rhythm, as a continued type of formal research. However, less apparent is perhaps the ways in which fashion, textiles, dance, music, art history and architecture were a great source for the changes within his work, most immediately apparent in his use of scale, form and especially the rhythmic qualities of some of his most successful compositions such as Gestalt Light

of these policies, Rosabal, who frequently visited museums, such as MoMA where artists like Josef Albers (1888-1976), Barnett Newman (1905-1970), Mark Rothko (1903-1970), Frank Stella (b. 1936) and Kenneth Noland (1924-2010) were shown, absorbed these artists' work while working as a teacher and later as textile designer in the fashion industry.

By the early 70s he was not only experimenting with Minimalism, as seen in the series of monochromatic works he exhibited in 1972 at Galeria Oller at the Center for Puerto Rican Cultural Relations, but he also briefly returned to his earlier practice of engraving [which he wouldn't exhibit again until the 1986 exhibition "Contemporary Print Makers from Latin America" at the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA) in Soho]. Throughout the rest of the decade, following his Galeria Oller show, he continued to further experiment and also began steadily exhibiting his work at the Cisneros Gallery alongside both international and Cuban artists-intellectuals, such as Zilia Sánchez, Carmen Herrera and Waldo Balart, all the while continuing his pedagogic work in the Manhattan school system. In addition to interacting and making strong connections with many Cuban exile avant-garde figures through teaching and exhibiting, including art critic Rafael Casalin as well as architects Raúl Tapia and Enrique Fuentes, he also occasionally collaborated with and worked for literary journals as an illustrator. It was after professionally dedicating himself to textile design, during which time he worked, collaborated and became a close friend of the early Abstract Expressionist artist Gloria Torrice, that he eventually came back to large-scale Geometric Abstraction paintings, and we see the ways in which his work in the fashion industry directly informed his paintings through his "conspicuous playful and vivid color arrangements."

In the above-mentioned Gestalt Light series, Rosabal assembles a grouping of intersecting shapes placed inside and outside of angles, creating a composition of traversing planes. The painting stands out in the choice of Rosabal's stark colors, primarily red and orange, orchestrated by other grey or black and white vortexes. As the eye travels from left to right, up and down, every element keeps moving back and forth in a never-ending optical feast. It brings to mind the 1960s spirit of New York when Rosabal arrived, as though he was illustrating Tom Wolfe's 1968 book *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* or his earlier and even more relevant compilation of essays *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (1965).

Despite its title suggesting other connections, Gestalt Light could very well have been a Concrete Art cover for Wolfe's books. Moreover, each piece in the Gestalt series establishes a lively, active dialogue with the cityscape of New York and the forceful, vertical architectural development surrounding him, greatly differing from Cuba's landscape and crumbling architecture. This also could very well have contributed to his tendency to load quantities of contrasting colors on top of each composition as well, reflecting the constant movement and transition within the City, as also seen in his Skyline pieces.

These paintings not only incorporate Josef Albers' color theory, employing varying colors to create areas of visual connection next to staccatos that give us glimpses into the inspiration of rhythm, dance and music on his compositions, which aside from NY's architecture and his experience as a designer resonate throughout Rosabal's oeuvre. Large vertical isosceles and scalene triangles of varying colors flip, conjoin and turn against one another all at once, as if different partners dancing and bouncing to rhythmic beats across the surface of the raw wooden panel. Despite being able to see the changes within Rosabal's work through the years, which one would expect to see given the artist's commitment to pushing his boundaries by constantly experimenting with abstraction, the artist has undoubtedly perfected his practice by allowing the past to inform his present, visually integrating his experiences of then into now and back again. Over the decades, Rosabal, as though anticipating the next abstract movement, continues to traverse the multilayered contexts and identities within the infinite and never-ending worlds of Abstraction.

Carla Stellweg – with research by Tessa Morefield
New York City & Mexico City
March, 2017

CARLA STELLWEG is a Latin-Americanist scholar who has worked as a museum and non-profit director, writer and editor, curator and professor. Ms. Stellweg is considered a pioneer promoter and facilitator in the Latin American international contemporary art field. She was and continues to be instrumental in introducing many young and mid-career artists from Latin America, Latino-U.S., Cuba and the Caribbean producing conceptual, socially-engaged art in both new and traditional media, either working in NY or from around the world.

ⁱ *À la Recherché du Temps Perdu* is the title of a seven-volume novel by Marcel Proust (1871–1922), and considered to be the author's most famous work not only because of its length, but also because of its theme of involuntary memory.

ⁱⁱ Martínez, Juan A. "Social and Political Commentary in Cuban Modernist Painting of the 1930's." Republished in *The Social and the Real – Political Art of the 1930's in the Western Hemisphere*, edited by Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden and Jonathan Weisberg. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006. pp. 25

ⁱⁱⁱ Gomez-Sicre, who was also a lawyer and author, and came to be the first Director of the Visual Arts Unit of the Organization of American States (OAS) founded in 1949. His role extended when in 1979 the Visual Arts Unit became "AMA | Art Museum of the Americas," and as such is the oldest museum of modern and contemporary Latin American and Caribbean art in the U.S. As part of the OAS, an international public organization whose aim is to promote democracy, peace, justice and solidarity among its 35-member countries, many Latin American artists and arts professionals have long been suspicious of its connections to the CIA. Gomez-Sicre's role and the OAS Museum of Latin American art remain to be fully researched to date.

^{vi} At the time of his exhibition the owner and director of the gallery was Ernesto Garcia.

^v Unfortunately today none of these works survive.

^{vi} Sarduy, Severo. *Pintura y Revolución. Nueva Generación. Revolución* January 31, 1959, Havana, Cuba, p. 49, reproduced in Cira Romero, Severo Sarduy in Cuba: 1953 -1961, Editorial Oriente, Santiago de Cuba 2007. p. 146 -147.

^{vii} McEwen, Abigail, and Lucas Zwirner. *Concrete Cuba: Cuban Geometric Abstraction from the 1950s*. New York, NY: David Zwirner, 2016. p. 142

^{viii} The essay states, "Only in a society split into antagonistic classes can abstract art appear; and only in the decisive stage of the struggle between two social classes - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in our times - can there be a movement that bases its excellence on isolating itself from general comprehension." Marinello continues, "There is no doubt that we are living in the moment of abstraction in the visual arts. Should we suffer this without opposition or objection?" Juan Marinello, "Conversación con nuestros pintores abstractos," reprinted in "Comentarios al Arte" (Havana: Letras Cubanas, 1983). p. 83.

^{ix} The Consejo Nacional de Cultura was created on January 4 1961, led by Edith Garcia Buchaca (1916 - 2015) while the UNEAC was founded on August 22 1961, headed by Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989).

^x Produced by Salvador Corratgé, this portfolio was the one of two volumes of serigraphs, the second called *A/Pintura Concreta* (1961) created in support of the national literacy campaign begun that year. This portfolio only included 7 members of Los Diez, as the others had either already left the country or were not invited to participate due to ideological differences with the new government. These members were: Soldevilla, de Oraá, Darié, Luis Martínez Pedro, Rosabal, Corratgé, and José María Mijares. Gago, Beatriz. *Más que 10 Concretos*. Madrid: Fundación Arte Cubano, 2015. pp.85-91.

^{xi} DiazCasas, Rafael. "José Rosabal From and Through Abstraction. A Life Journey." *Art On Cuba* 07 June - August 2015. pp. 68-73.

^{xii} Co curated by the author.

^{xiii} In 1971 with *Alacrán Azul*, edited by Juan Manuel Salvat; and later with Linden Lane Magazine (March 1982 – present), founded, produced and edited by Belkis Cuza Malé and Heberto Padilla. DiazCasas, Rafael. "Abstracción en claridades criollas, acotaciones pertinentes sobre José Rosabal." *Linden Lane Magazine*, Vol. 33 No. 3; Autumn, 2014. p. 22

^{xiv} DiazCasas, Rafael. "José Rosabal From and Through Abstraction. A Life Journey." *Art On Cuba* 07 June - August 2015. pp. 68-73.



Untitled (7 Pintores Concretos Portafolio) 1961
Serigraph
15 x 11 in (38 x 28 cm)

José Rosabal, a life journey through Abstraction

Everything, where to begin and where to end, should be worked out in the mind beforehand.

Ad Reinhardt

The end of the Second World War witnessed the rise of Abstraction among the more radical international art circles, as New York became the center of the Art World and artists turned their creative heads toward the new artistic metropolis. Incredibly close to New York was Havana, due to strong political and economic ties, with a steady influx of travelers in both directions, spurring a dynamic exchange of all types of information. Younger artists were paying full attention to creative patterns; nonetheless for many Paris still was the place to go to develop an artistic career.

Havana, the epicenter of the island's artistic life, was taking shape as an international metropolis, redesigning its centuries-old colonial face with new skyscrapers, built following the latest world technical advances. At the same time, a mainly conservative way of living was still very much in place.

As greater numbers of artists became devoted to Abstraction during the 1950s, more and more of them protested what they had come to view as its lack of recognition. This conversation extended to the end of the decade and beyond, and became emphatically reshaped by the social changes of the 1959 Cuban Revolution. While artists were forcefully working in the field of Abstraction, the press, public and collectors were being careful about embracing the trend. Over time, societal and artistic gestures challenged this reticence by charging the abstract realm with decisive political overtones.

The polarizing viewpoints of artists, writers and intellectuals were being

voiced in daily newspapers, magazines and artistic and literary journals from all colors of the island's political spectrum. By the end of the 1960s, these dialogues became more belligerent and defined the livelihoods of many artists, especially those attracted toward Abstraction.

Throughout his career, José Rosabal (Manzanillo 1935), a painter who came of age in Cuba between the late 1950s and the early 1960s, has shown a steady interest in Abstraction; however, this interest has not been exclusive. In a 1959 exhibition review, poet and writer Severo Sarduy entangled him as a member of a new generation of artists that defined their works by returning to figuration. Early in his career his initial figurative steps caught the attention of the popular art critic Rafael Marquina, who reviewed one of Rosabal's early group exhibitions as part of a biweekly Sunday column in *Información* newspaper.

In that brief first figurative phase, his paintings displayed a clear interest in Cezanne's artwork and Marc Chagall's poetic surreal universe. Marquina appraised José Rosabal's work as a new type of neo-expressionism. However, with his characteristically clever vision, Marquina was the first critic to notice Rosabal's subtle and constant interest in colors, rhythm and music, which later became solid and bold conductive threads in building a devotion toward non-figurative alleyways of expression.

An abstract revolution

The unquestionable stronghold developing by Abstraction in the second half of the 20th century in Cuba was being pioneered by artists like Jose Manuel Acosta, Enrique Riverón, Ernesto González Puig and Marcelo Pogolotti who, since the late 1920s, had been experimenting within the bounds of the genre. Sandú Darié, Pedro Álvarez, Roberto Diago, Carmen Herrera, Luis Martínez Pedro, Guido Llinás, Hugo Consuegra and Mario Carreño were some of the youngest artists that followed through, leading the Abstract momentum at the time. Abstraction was then perceived by many artists and intellectuals as a reflection of a highbrow stance, diametrically opposed to the quest to express a national identity.

The debate on nation and creation had been intensifying within literary circles since 1949, when Jorge Mañach, associated with *Revista de Avance*

(1927 - 1930), started a debate with José Lezama Lima, founder and intellectual leader of *Orígenes* magazine (1944 - 1956), on the significance of the search for national identity in Cuban arts. By 1955, a defector of the *Orígenes* group, Virgilio Piñera, had taken the polemic further with the first issue of his magazine *Ciclón*, which was published in January. Piñera opposed Mañach, Lezama and the ideas of the entire previous generation with his statement *Borrón y Cuenta Nueva* (Clean Slate). In the same issue, he also published an essay by Ernesto Sabato, "Sobre el Arte Abstracto de Nuestro Tiempo" (About the Abstract Art of Our Time), which was a substantial radical artistic proclamation. Sabato's article analyzed the then influential position on Abstraction of German art historian Wilhelm Worringer and how it had defined the era. He shed some light on the origin, significance and essence of Abstraction, declaring it the most relevant intellectual path for artistic creation at the time.

In Havana, between January and April 1953, a series of exhibitions led to the formation of *Los Once* group, integrated by young artists interested in non-objective art and inspired by Geometric Abstraction, Informalism, Tachism and Abstract Expressionism. Toward the end of the decade, by 1958 another artistic group was formed, this time was a diverse multigenerational collective with a well-developed individual artistic focus, mainly attracted by Geometric Abstraction, Neo-Plasticism and Madi practices, and informally associated under the name *10 Pintores Concretos*. Throughout their life as a group, the members were actually eleven: Pedro Álvarez (1922-1997), Wifredo Arcay (1925-1997), Salvador Corratgé (1928-2014), Sandú Darié (1908-1991), Luis Martínez Pedro (1910-1989), Alberto Menocal (1928-2004), José Mijares (1921-2004), Pedro de Oraá (b. 1931), Dolores (Loló) Soldevilla (1901-1971), Rafael Soriano (1920-2015), and later José Rosabal.

The VI Salón Nacional de Pintura y Escultura (Sixth National Salon of Painting and Sculpture), which opened on January 10, 1953, mirrored the sturdy interest the youngest generation had in Abstraction. This interest had grown increasingly robust over the decade, as evidenced by the 1959 Salon, in which Rosabal had a presence.

A reflection of the phenomenon, in words by Sarduy, was published in *Lunes de Revolución* newspaper: "I acknowledge not only the quantitative but also the qualitative supremacy of abstract painting... Achieving a

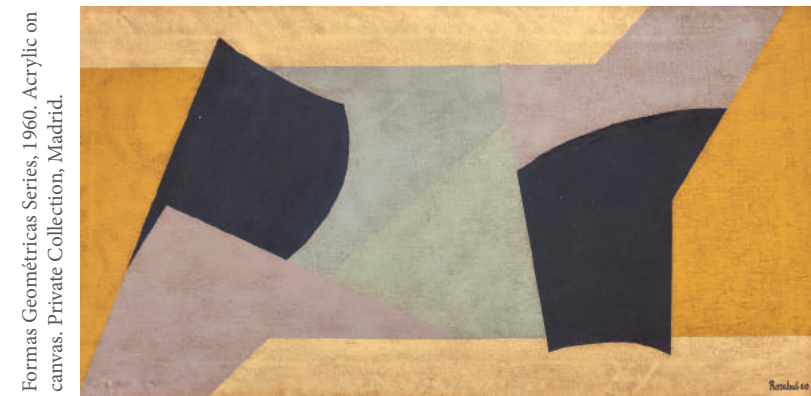
national painting that responds to the issues and needs of the Revolution is a concern painters should keep in mind."

At the same time, Marxist art historian and critic Graziela Pogolotti took a more lapidary view of the Salon when she stated in *Nueva Revista Cubana*: "Painting is suffering from a prolonged self-immolation ... This phenomenon has coincided with the rise of Abstraction, which among us has contributed, in the years just gone by, to the impoverishment of visual arts."

These dialogues defined Rosabal's artistic formative period and, a year after graduating from San Alejandro Academy (1959) and taking classes with Mijares, he joined the *10 Pintores Concretos* group – having been invited by Corratgé and Darié. Although his exhibition at the *Asociación de Reporteros* (January 1960) was a solid launching pad, the work he displayed at the Lyceum in February of the following year affirmed, with more strength, the earlier invitation to join the group. With this exhibition, Rosabal



Paris 1980s, photo by Guido Llinás.

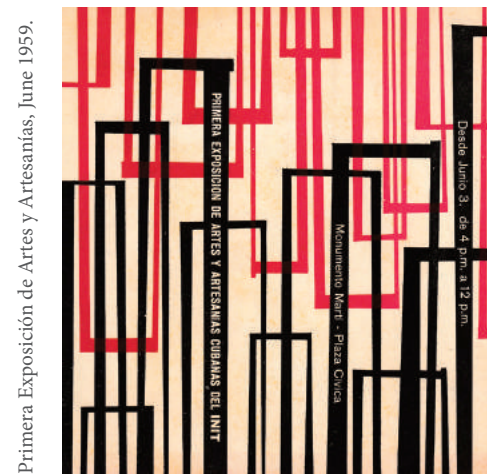


Formas Geométricas Series, 1960. Acrylic on canvas. Private Collection, Madrid.

embarked on a more radical search for Abstraction, inspired by the work of Russian-French abstract painter Serge Poliakoff.

Confronting the Russian artist's work from international art magazines in the house of his friend Servado Cabrera Moreno, Rosabal executed a series of paintings after Poliakoff named *Figuras Geométricas* (Geometric Figures). They were made following a reduced palette of bold cold colors, combining hard edged simple geometric forms built with alternating straight and curvilinear lines, creating grid areas of plain colors interconnecting with each other.

Very quickly, Rosabal had moved from being part of those artists making art “signifying something” to being a member of the “resistance group,” as per Severo Sarduy’s definition in the pages of *Revolución* newspaper. Drawn into the currents of the time, José Rosabal became one of the founding members of the Union Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (Cuban Writers and Artists National Union) in 1961 and actively took part in countless exhibitions throughout the country, celebrating the new social changes in 1959. It is perhaps relevant to mention the “Primera Exposición de Artes y Artesanías Cubanas del INIT,” where he showed his geometric paintings alongside the members of 10 Pintores Concretos. Later, he started working at the Consejo Nacional de Cultura (National Council of Culture), briefly became José Lezama Lima’s personal assistant, and eventually general coordinator of the Arístides Fernández School of Brigade



Teachers, a temporary school training instructors as part of the 1961 National Literacy Campaign. As a tribute to the literacy campaign, and in the midst of his collaboration with the 10 Pintores Concretos, Rosabal took part in the Primer Congreso Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (First National Congress of Cuban Writers and Artists) (1961), for which a remarkable two-set lithographic portfolio was produced. Only seven of the ten artists who were members of the group joined the event, this being their last exhibition together. In the first portfolio, each artist took as inspiration the letter A of various international alphabets, in deference to the Spanish word *Alfabetización* (Literacy), Rosabal worked with the Coptic alphabet. The second portfolio was a purely aesthetic abstract geometric exercise, for which he created an exquisite reductive hard-edged composition of sudden minimalist color combinations resembling the formation of a silent lightning bolt.

This rigorous reductive geometric and “refined Concrete self-express-

sion” (as per Graziela Pogolotti’s observation of Rosabal’s work) in his 1965 solo catalog exhibition was built out of his “sharp critical assessments, concerns for art problems, desire to study and to find wider artistic horizons.” At the time, Poliakov was not the only artist he was looking after; Rosabal also intended to establish an artistic dialogue with the works of some of his Cuban peers, including Wifredo Lam, Mario Carreño and friend, fellow teacher and member of 10 Pintores Concretos, Jose Mijares – a conversation that continues in his recent paintings.

In the case of Lam, *Contrapunto* (1951), a painting on permanent display at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, where the Consejo Nacional de Cultura was housed (and where Rosabal worked), offers unfailing references when coming to composition and the use of rhomboidal elements. Another reference is *Tensión Espacial* (1957) by Carreño. Shown at the 1957 solo exhibition in the National Museum, it is a painting composed with a rigorous juxtaposition of basic geometric elements while creating a multiplane ordered grid.



Mario Carreño, *Tensión Espacial*, 1957. Oil on canvas.

Jose Mijares, for Rosabal, was more than a former teacher; he became a mentor and while in Havana an always present figure with whom he discussed art themes. With his gregarious personality, Mijares made his house and studio a meeting point for many established and emerging artists. These tertulias occasionally moved to a local café at Galiano and Laguna streets. *Luz Vertical* (1952) is one of his first paintings in which he explored compositing intricate



Wifredo Lam, *Contrapunto*, 1950. Oil on canvas.

figurative subjects with radical geometric elements, an early eye-opening experience for Rosabal.

Later in his painting, Rosabal, like Mijares, started to organize the space in areas of colors, extending the straight lines to the extreme, looking to attain an overall harmony and a golden ratio proportion – often achieved by making the vertical axle of the painting the driving force of its internal rhythm.

In 1960, from *Artes Plásticas* magazine, it was again Sarduy who called attention to Rosabal’s abilities as an engraver, assessing his works by their pictorial quality and linking him with Guido Llinás and Manuel Vidal, both members of Los Once. Since then, he has shown through his praxis a steady interest in experimenting within the boundaries of gestural abstraction. By the end of 1962, together with Juan Boza, Eduardo Cerviño, Antonia Eiriz, Ana Rosa Gutiérrez, Umberto Peña, Alfredo Sosabravo, Lesbia Vent Dumois and Rafael Zarza, among others, he became a member of Taller Experimental de Gráfica (Graphic Experimental Workshop), contributing to revitalize the field of engraving in the Island. This was an opportunity that led Rosabal to explore, to the point of mastering, several engraving techniques—a practice that even today he exercises from time to time.

Because of his capability as an engraver, very early in his career he was invited to represent Cuba at the Segunda Bienal Interamericana de México (1960) and the Segunda Bienal Americana de Grabado in Chile (1965). In Havana, from 1963 to 1968, Rosabal displayed his work at the annual exhibitions of the Taller Experimental de Gráfica, as well as at Galería Latinoamericana in Casa de las Américas, where he won several honorable mentions in the annual Latin American contest held each year from 1964 to 1966. While continuously keeping his engraving practice over the years, Rosabal did not show etchings again until 1972, at The Society of Friends of Puerto Rico, sponsored by the New York State Council of the Arts, and, in 1986, at the Contemporary Print Makers from Latin America exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA) in Soho.

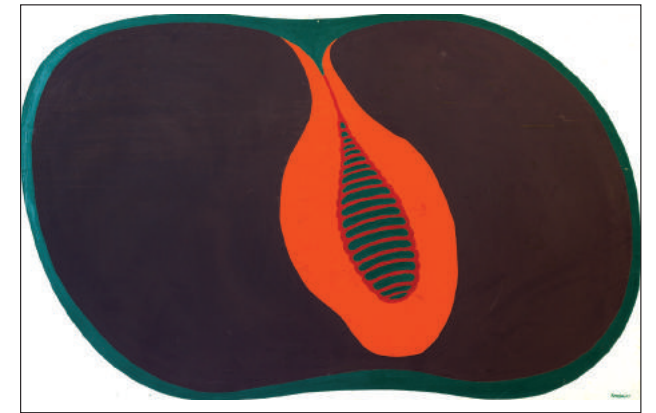
Parallel to his work as an engraver, late in 1966 and in collaboration with Julio Berestein, Rosabal began to show an interest in large scale paintings charged with amorphous pop-erotic innuendos, inspired by the nuances

of sex and words in everyday life, as well as by the exuberance and sensual forms of tropical fruits and vegetables. Pictorially, with this series, he snatched and used elements of his abstract works, like large extensions of plain bright basic colors, juxtaposing them on a strikingly off-balanced set with simple organic compositions. This was an interest that arose as a dialogue with and a counterpart to the experimentation by his friend and fellow painter Umberto Peña, with whom he was working in the Taller Experimental de Gráfica.

Toward the mid-sixties, the debates in artistic and intellectual circles on the relevance of Abstraction versus Figuration as a tool to educate the masses became highly polarized. Some dominant voices strongly led the balance to gravitate in favor of developing an educational figurative movement. The interest of José Rosabal in knowing and conquering the international art world, as well as his commitment to Abstraction and the possibility of the genre being handed a death sentence by the new society, informed his decision to emigrate with his family to the United States in December 1968.

Roads and trails into the world

Since the post-war years, New York City has been the center of the art world, a place where Rosabal has lived to the present day, with short stays in Los Angeles, California. By the time of his arrival, in opposition to more than a decade of Abstract Expressionism’s domination, Minimalism was in full force, after the secular influential 1966 exhibitions *Primary Structures*, at the Jewish Museum, and *Systematic Painting*, at the



Génesis, 1967. Acrylic on canvas. MNBA Collection.

Guggenheim Museum. He was very much impressed by the art of his time shown at MoMA, including original works by Barney Newman, Kenneth Nolan and Ad Reinhardt, among others, which before he had only seen in books and art magazines.

In 1969 he joined the Pratt Graphics Center Printmaking and worked side by side with a significant roster of international artists, like Chilean Juan Downey. Later, he taught in New York City Community College, attended the Fashion Institute of Technology, and settled down as an independent textile designer until the 1990s.

In the city, Rosabal connected with the diaspora community of Cuban artists and intellectuals which included art critic Rafael Casalin, architects Raúl Tapia and Enrique Fuentes, art dealer Florencio García Cisneros, and painters like Cerviño, Zilia Sánchez, Waldo Balart and Carmen Herrera. He exhibited at the Dume Gallery in 1971 and the following year presented a full force exploration into Minimalist painting at Galería Oller in the Center for Puerto Rican Cultural Relations. For that exhibition, Rosabal created a series of mid-size monochromatic bands painted with a reduced palette of colors: black, white and yellow.

It is perhaps with this show that he started further experiments on the canvas, leaving large sections of it unpainted, exposing the raw material and working around its natural quality. The work by Morris Luis, Kenneth Noland and Helen Frankenthaler had inspired him.



Untitled, 1971. Acrylic on canvas.

Systematically, from 1971 and through the decade, he exhibited at Cisneros Gallery alongside Cuban and international artists, while keeping his presence in the New York educational community gallery system. As a textile designer, he worked, collaborated and became a close friend of the early abstract expressionist artist Gloria Torrice.

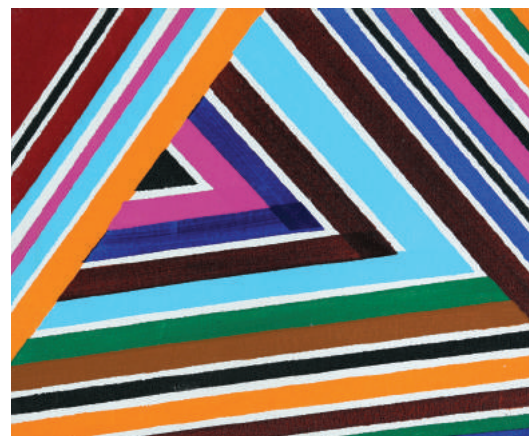
These were the years, between 1971 and 1972, in which José Rosabal worked with the literary journal *Alacrán Azul*, edited by Juan Manuel Salvat and artistically directed out of Miami by Mijares. Some decades later, he developed a similar collaboration as an illustrator with *Linden Lane Magazine*, created by Heberto Padilla, co-edited with Belkis Cuza Malé and still active today. Recently he has cooperated with Jesús Barquet and Ediciones *La Mirada* in La Cruces, New Mexico.

The following years were paramount for the inspiration of Rosabal's most recent development: years of intense solitary exercises experimenting with free associations of materials, forms and colors, slowly building an introspective narrative, gravitating between figuration and abstraction, past and present. Throughout this entire period, he generally worked on small size paintings and on paper, although after the 1990s he would again work on canvases of a larger size and a challengingly rich color palette.

José Rosabal's recent paintings are bold big-size radical approaches to Abstraction, led by a color-driven enthusiasm, following a progression of formal hard-edged development after Joseph Albers' color theory in which one color does not exist without the other.

Frequently the point of departure for each of his series is generated by the interaction of a specific color with the rhythm of a chosen form, employing the fluid dynamic that art critic Rafael Marquina already noticed as early as 1959.

After an absence of forty-seven years, in 2015 he returned to Cuba, where he was invited to develop a project for the Twelfth Havana Biennial as of



Untitled, 1989. Acrylic on board.



Fuente de Luz Mural, Malecón, Havana. May - June 2015.

part of the independent event *Detrás del Muro II*. The exhibition closed a life circle for José Rosabal. His project, a site-specific large scale four-double paneled abstract geometric portable mural titled *Fuente de Luz* (Fountain of Light), up to this moment the largest piece in his body of work, intends to be a formal translation of the dynamic of life by the seawall section of the chosen site: Malecón Avenue and Belascoaín Street, not far from where he used to reside.

The mural came as a result of a series of artworks in which he returned to experimenting with a controlled and reduced palette of colors, as he had done in the 1960s and 1970s. This series explored the playfulness of light under various circumstances and/or latitudes, a subject not exclusive to artists of Cuban background. *Fuente de Luz* mural is the result of a formal color experimentation related to the interaction of light on the sea, and fostered after the early 20th century traditional paintings by Leopoldo Románach in his *Marinas Series*, as well as later in the century by fellow Concrete painter Luis Martínez Pedro in his *Aguas Territoriales Series*.

Furthermore, in his work Rosabal has also built upon his love for music, dance, fashion and architecture. His compositions are recurrently inspired by melodies and/or dance postures and movements, as well as the forceful architectural development around the city of New York. Taking architecture into account, he has created several series of paintings, including *Flying Cities*, *Skyline* and *Vanishing Points*. A recent painting for the latest series has been acquired by PAMM and is currently on display as part of the second phase of the exhibition "On the Horizon", among contemporary

artists of a Cuban background. His conspicuous playful and vivid color arrangements are a direct outcome of Rosabal's years as a professional working in the fashion industry as a textile designer.

Even though his paintings are about the freedom of geometric forms, they are not built arbitrarily. Instead, they are the result of an inquisitive selection process after intense long journeys of sketching—a fact that does not preclude the opportunity for improvisation and spontaneity during the moment of final creation. Rosabal's work is usually done breaking the basic rules, with the intention of leaving behind the vigorous severity of formalism and avoiding the motionlessness of visual perfection. He conceives his pieces as spontaneous individual ludic explorations of his own materiality. The goal is to create a series of paintings that independently posit and unfold the existence of new realities.

Contemporary Rosabal artworks have a direct conceptual and formal conversation with the work of internationally well-known painters like El Anatsui, Odili Donald Odita, and Mark Grotjahn, among others.

The artworks by the 10 Pintores Concretos group have reached worldwide exposure since the two-phase exhibition *Concrete Cuba* at David Zwirner Gallery – London (Sept 3 - Oct 3, 2015) and New York (Jan 7 - Feb 20, 2016), in which Rosabal was represented. With eyes turned toward Cuba, and the legacy of Abstract artists since the 1950s, the international art market has been enthusiastically responding to his historical and recent works placed at galleries and major auction houses. In 2016, he was awarded the 57th Premio Internazionale Bice Bugatti-Giovanni Segantini by the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milano* and the *Libera Accademia di Pittura Vittorio Viviani in Nova Milanese*, and the Italian President granted his Medal. A painting by Rosabal was acquired as part of the city of Nova Milanese's cultural heritage.

Over the years Rosabal has experimented with Abstraction by following a playful and inquisitive mindset combining forms, colors and actions while maintaining a dynamic committed dialogue and active lifelong journey between his past and present as an artist. Reinvigorated by his history today, José Rosabal is persistently searching for ways of expression through art.

Rafael DiazCasas
Miami – New York, September - October 2017.

RAFAEL DIAZCASAS is an art historian and independent curator. He works as an art advisor based in New York City. Interested in modern and contemporary art, with a focus on Latin American and Cuban art. He has curated exhibitions in the United States and abroad. He writes about art and culture for several national and international publications, and is co-author of *Hard Light: The Work of Emilio Sanchez*. (Prestel London – New York, 2011). He has been doing research, writing and working about the history of Abstraction in Cuba in the second half of the 20th century.

¹ This essay was originally published as José Rosabal From and Through Abstraction: A Life Journey on Art, On Cuba 07, Havana – Miami, June - August 2015. pp. 68-73. This is an updated longer version. I would like to thank Fernando Alonso and Eduardo Cerviño for their active collaboration with archive materials.

¹¹ He was directly exposed to a very rich patriotic and intellectual life at an early age. His family was in the circle of Panchita Rosales, widow of Cuban Independence War General Bartolome Masó, and his paternal grand uncle was the last personal assistant of Cuba's national hero Jose Martí. His father, a member of the literary groups of Manzanillo, joined the well-known Wednesday Talk salon and was associated with Orto magazine (1912 -1957), founded by Juan Francisco Sariol and the base for what was perhaps the 20th century's most relevant and long-lasting literary group in the east of the island.

¹¹¹ Severo Sarduy, Adriano Buergo, *Diario Libre*, April 19, 1959, section 1, page 85, reproduced in Cira Romero. *Severo Sarduy en Cuba: 1953 -1961*, Editorial Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, 2007, p 238 -239.

¹⁴ Rafael Marquina, Cuatro Pintores en la Galería del Prado. En la linde y en la luz. Lino Pedroso, Aristarco O'Really, José Rosabal y Miguel Collazo. *Información Rotogravure*. Correo Quincenal de las Artes y las Letras. Sunday, July 12, 1959, p. D2

¹⁵ Rafael Marquina. cat. *Exposición Rosabal*, Galería del Prado, Havana, Cuba, June 14 - 30, 1959.

¹⁶ This is an idea by Janet Batet, developed after collaboration for an exhibition at ArtSpace Virginia Miller Galleries. For more information, see *The Silent Shout. Voices in Cuban Abstract Art, 1950-2013*, Arton Cuba 01, Dec 2013-Feb 2014, pages 31 -37.

¹⁷ *Ciclón* was published from January 1955 to April – June 1957, and an issue in January – March 1959.

¹⁸ Sábado, Ernesto. Sobre el arte abstracto de nuestro tiempo. *Ciclón. Revista Literaria*, January 1955, No 1, Havana, Cuba, p 9 -15. The article was dated September 1954.

¹⁹ Severo Sarduy. El Salón Nacional de Pintura y Escultura. *Lunes de Revolución* No 31, October 19, 1959, Havana, p 2 – 4, reproduced in Cira Romero, page 184.

²⁰ Graziela Pogolotti. Salón 1959, *Nueva Revista Cubana*, Año I, No 3, Oct – Nov – Dec 1959, p. 207.

²¹ Rosabal. *Pintura y Plaka* [January 15 22, 1960]. *Asociación de Reporters de la Habana*, Zulueta 253, Havana, Cuba.

²² Severo Sarduy. *Revolución Nueva Generación*, January 31, 1959, Havana, Cuba, p. 49, reproduced in Cira Romero, p. 146 -147. For more information on this categorization, see Silvana F. Santucci. *Severo Sarduy: Arte y Literatura* (1959). *Argus-a Art & Humanities*. Vol. III No 10, October 2013. Whittier College, Los Angeles, CA.

²³ The exhibition opened June 3, 1959. All the members of 10 Pintores Concretos were represented, with the exception of Salvador Corratgè and Lolo Soldevilla. I would like to thank Fernando Alonso for directing my attention to this exhibition.

²⁴ *Exposición de Pintura, Grabado y Cerámica. Primer Congreso Nacional de Escritores y Artistas Cubanos* [August 18 22]. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.

²⁵ Due to personal and political reasons, Pedro Álvarez, Alberto Menocal and Rafael Soriano did not join the portfolios.

²⁶ Graziela Pogolotti. cat. Rosabal. *Dibujos*, Galería de Arte, Galiano y Concordia, Havana, Cuba, September 22, 1965.

²⁷ Rosabal saw Lam's work for the first time as a student at his groundbreaking solo exhibit at the Havana University in 1955, where they met personally.

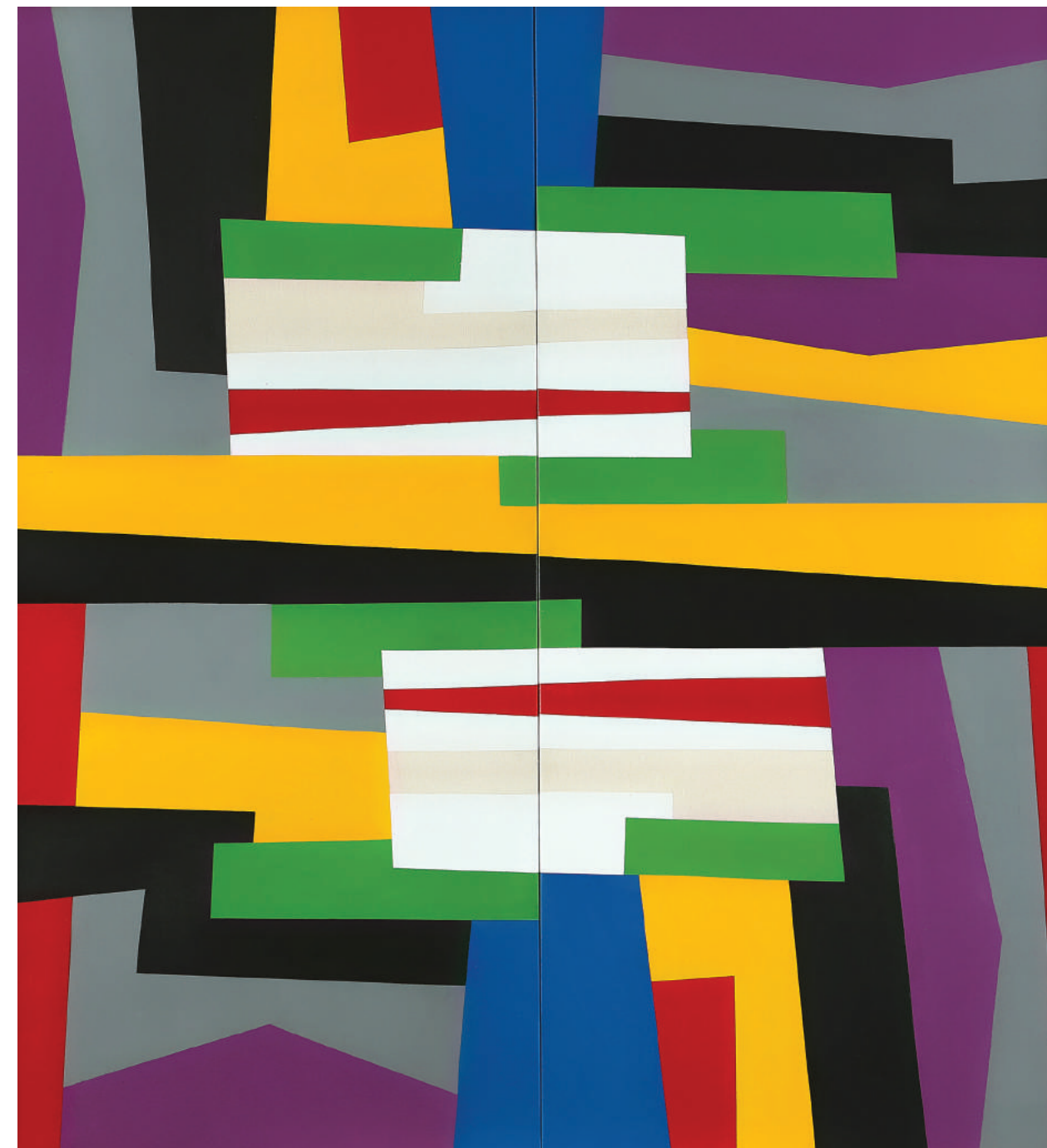
²⁸ For more information on José Mijares' work see Rosa Oliva, *Mijares Imágenes Plásticas*. Private printing, Havana, June 1956.

²⁹ *Artes Plásticas* magazine was a short-lived official publication of the Dirección General de Cultura, associated with the Secretary of Education.

³⁰ Rosabal set a studio at Berenstein's house and leave almost all his work there when left Cuba in 1968, recently surfaced at the MNBA's collection.

³¹ *Detrás del Muro II* is an independent project presenting a group of international artists and curated by Juanito Delgado in collaboration with the Fondo de Bienes Culturales in Havana and the Cuban Arts Fund in New York City.

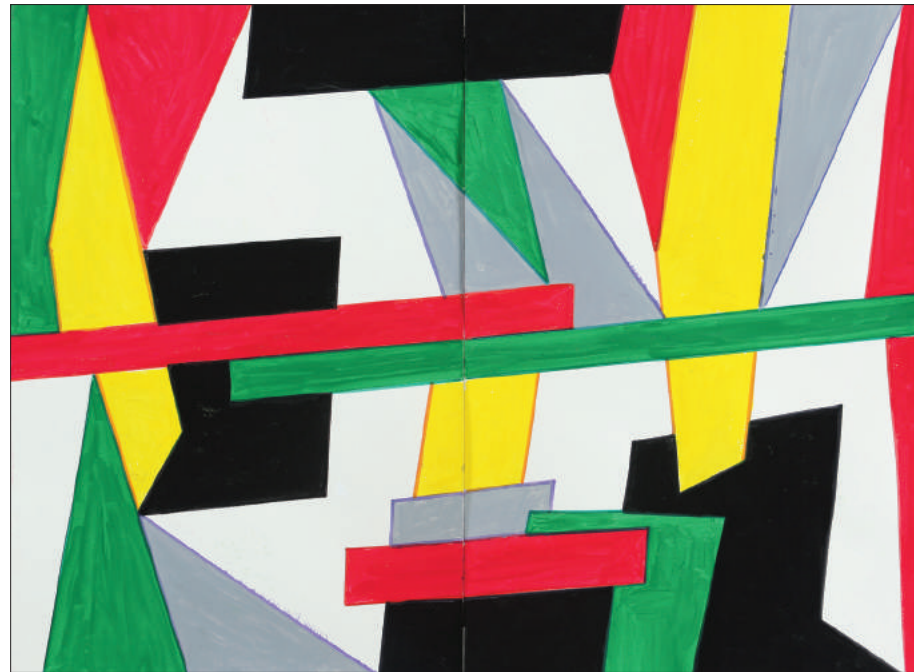
³² *On the Horizon. Contemporary Cuban Art from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection. Phase 2: Abstracting History*. [Sept 22, 2017 – Jan 7, 2018]. Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL



Vanishing Points (yellow) n.d. Diptych
Acrylic on raw canvas
69 x 65 in (175 x 165 cm)
PAMM permanent collection



Untitled II 1988
Watercolor on paper
22 x 30 in (56 x 76 cm)



Untitled I 1989
Watercolor on paper
22 x 30 in (56 x 76 cm)



Primavera Abril 2008
Acrylic on canvas
38.5 x 48.5 in (98 x 123 cm)



Primavera Mayo 2008
Acrylic on canvas
48 x 37.5 in (123 x 95 cm)



Estructura 2008
Acrylic on wood panel
31.5 x 21 in (80 x 53 cm)



Untitled I 2008
Acrylic on wood panel
48 x 36 in (123 x 91cm)



Untitled 2008
Acrylic on wood panel
48 x 36 in (123 x 91 cm)



Collision n.d.
Acrylic on raw canvas
35 x 68 in (89 x 173 cm)



Flying City n.d.
Acrylic on raw canvas
68 x 25 in (173 x 64 cm)



Flying City n.d.
Acrylic on raw canvas
68.5 x 29 in (174 x 74 cm)



Untitled (yellow & grey) 2015
Acrylic on raw canvas
60 x 48 in (152 x 123 cm)



Untitled 2015 Diptych
Acrylic on raw canvas
71 x 65 in (180 x 165 cm)



Up (negro y rojo) 2015
Acrylic on raw canvas
73 x 48 in (185 x 123 cm)



Composicion Ascendente Desendente n.d.
Acrylic on canvas
33.5 x 43 in (89 x 109 cm)



Circulos II 2016
Acrylic on raw canvas
43.5 x 63 in (110 x 160 cm)



Circulos (verde pistacho) 2016
Mixed media on raw canvas,
42 x 66 in (107 x 168 cm)



Circulos III 2016
Acrylic on raw canvas
68 x 44 in (173 x 112 cm)



Fuente de Luz - Blanco y Negro II 2015
Acrylic on raw canvas
55.5 x 32.5 in (141 x 83 cm)



Fuente de Luz -Blanco y Negro III 2015
Acrylic on raw canvas
56 x 32 in (142 x 81 cm)



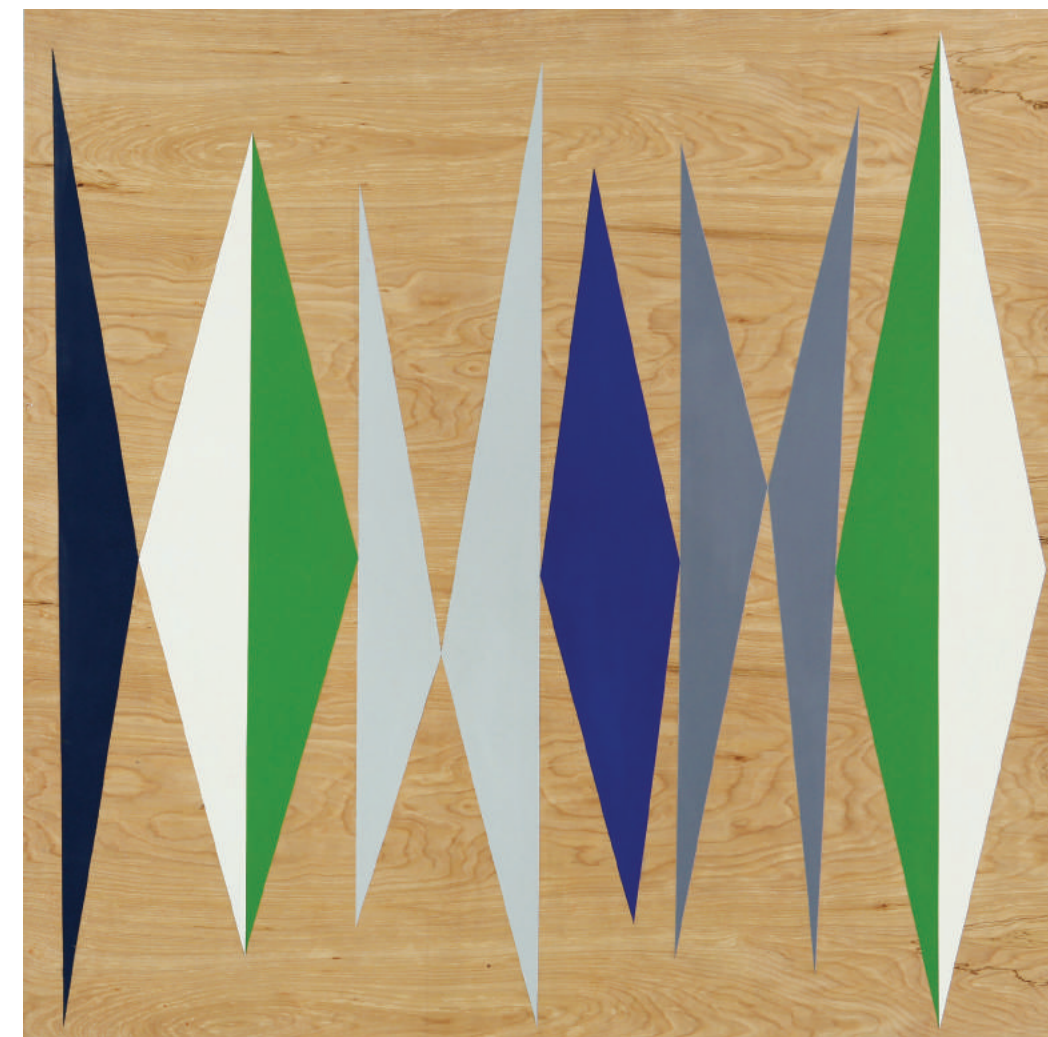
Blanco y Negro Series V 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
50.5 x 34 in (128 x 86 cm)



Blanco y Negro Series VI 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
51 x 34 in (130 x 86 cm)



Leaning out of windows 2016
 Acrylic on wood panel
 45 x 28 in (114 x 71 cm)



Skyline II 2016
 Industrial acrylic on wood panel
 48 x 48 in (123 x 123 cm)



Skyline 2016
 Industrial acrylic on wood panel
 48 x 36 in (123 x 91 cm)



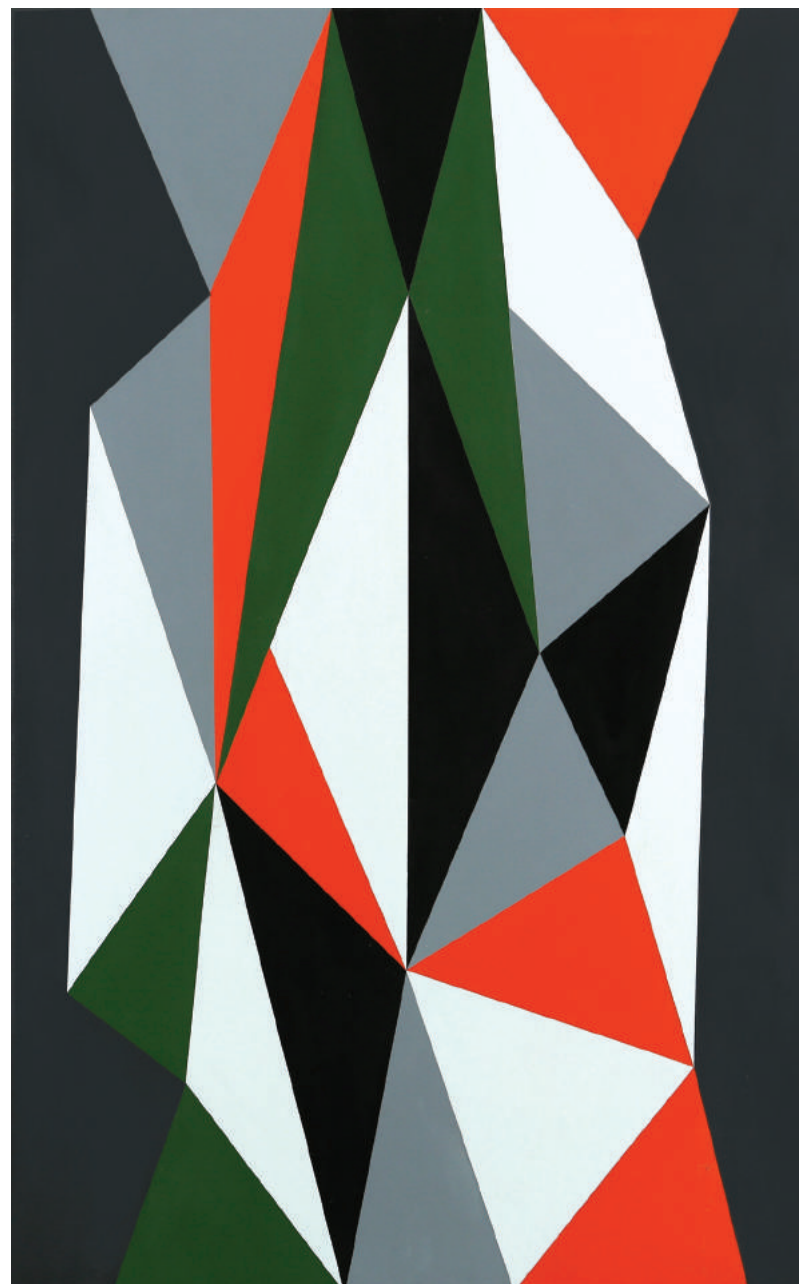
Gestalt Red-Pink 2016
Industrial acrylic on wood panel
60 x 48 in (152 x 123 cm)



Gestalt Orange-Yellow 2016
Industrial acrylic on wood panel
60 x 48 in (152 x 123 cm)



Gestalt I 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
68 x 48 in (173 x 123 cm)



Gestalt II 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
68 x 48 in (173 x 123 cm)



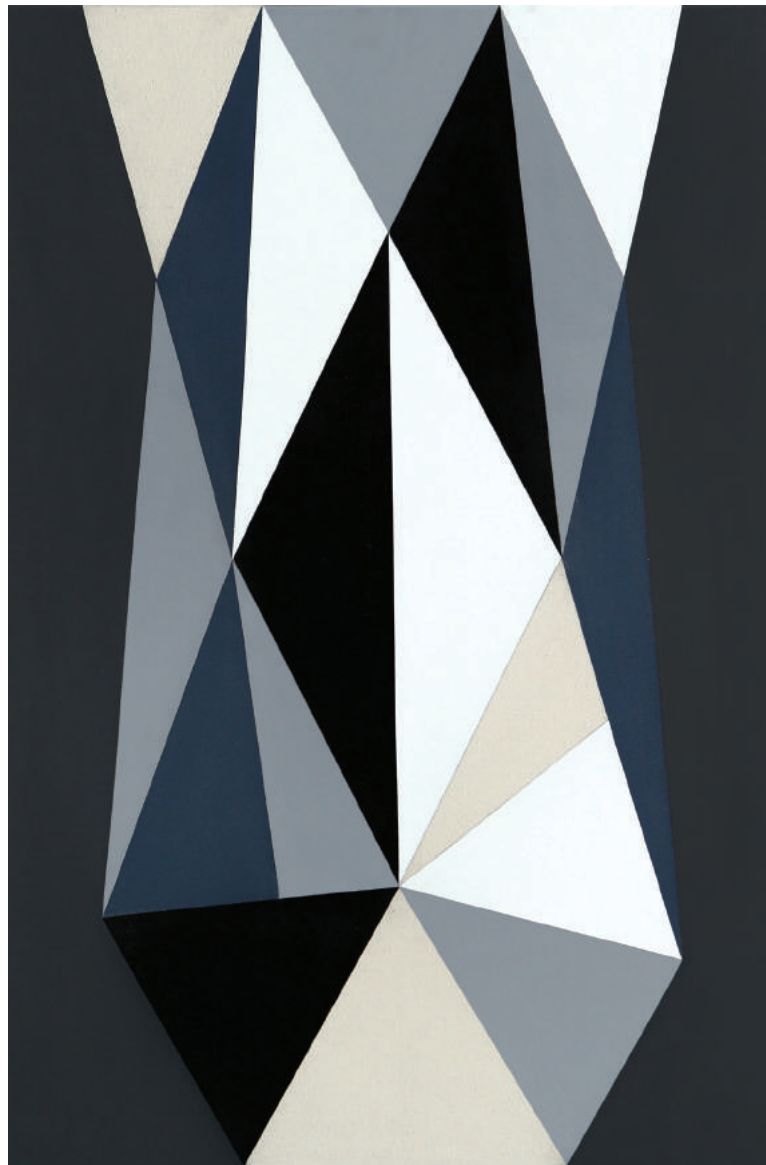
Gestalt IV (A la sombra de las muchachas en flor) 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
68 x 86 in (173 x 218 cm)



Sunset in Milano II 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
41 x 68 in (104 x 173 cm)



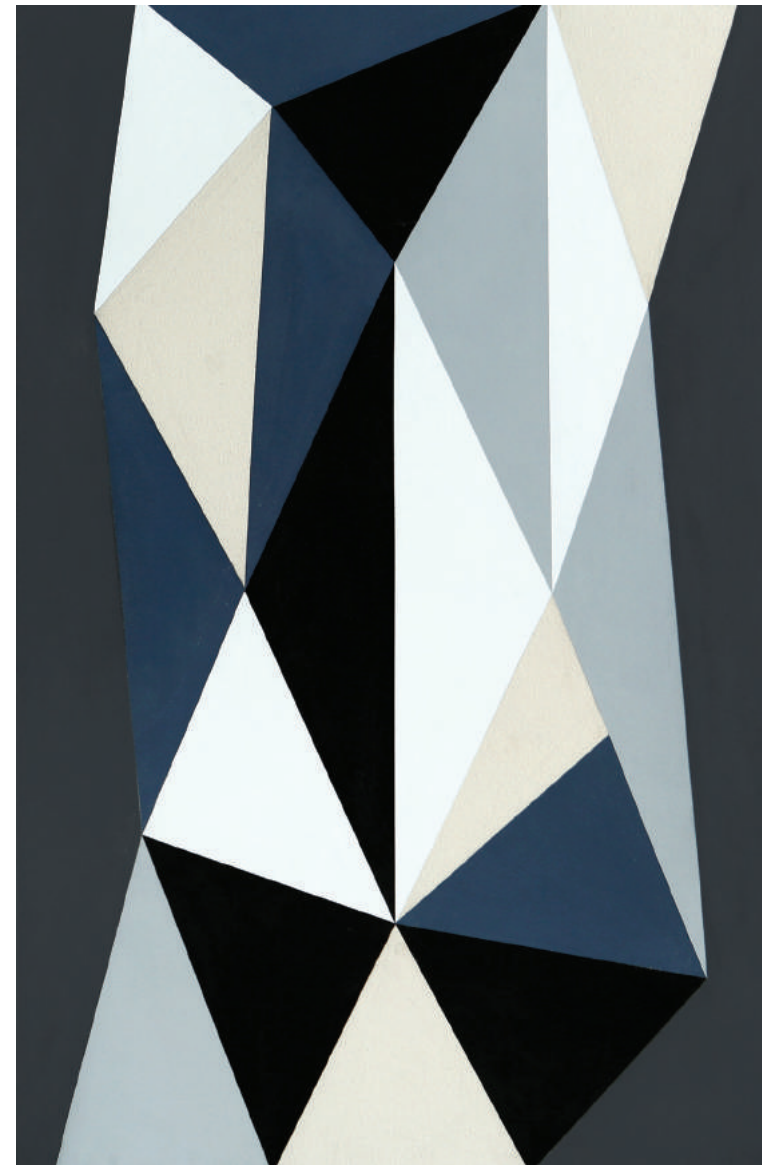
Gestalt V 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
97 x 72 in (246 x 183 cm)



Blanco y Negro Series I 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
50 x 33 in (127 x 84 cm)



Blanco y Negro Series II 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
50 x 33 in (127 x 84 cm)



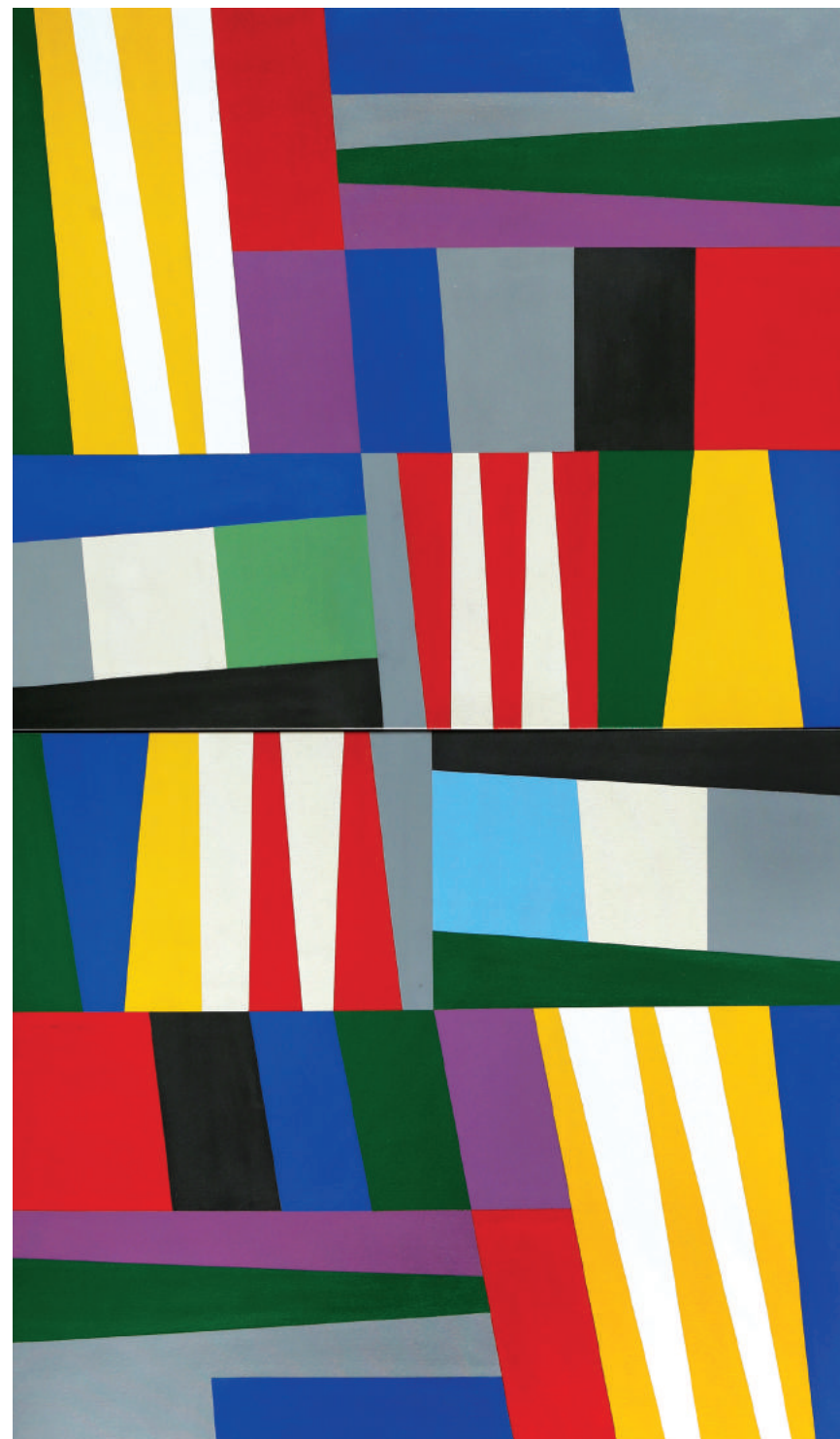
Blanco y Negro Series III 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
50 x 33 in (127 x 84 cm)



Blanco y Negro Series IV 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
51 x 34 in (130 x 86 cm)



Planes I 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
96 x 56 in (244 x 142 cm)



Planes II 2017
Acrylic on raw canvas
96 x 56 in (244 x 142 cm)



Column 2016
Acrylic on canvas
68 x 34.5 in (173 x 88 cm)

José Angel Rosabal Fajardo

Manzanillo, Cuba, 1935

Education

1953-1959 Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes “San Alejandro” (anexa), Havana
1962 Taller Experimental de Gráfica (TEG), Havana
1969 Pratt Graphics Center Printmaking, New York
1974 Fashion Institute of Technology Textile Design, New York

Professional Activity

1960 Member Grupo Diez Pintores Concretos, Havana
1961 Founding Member. Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (UNEAC), Havana
1962 1968 Member. Taller Experimental de Gráfica (TEG), Havana
1970 -1972 Art History Professor New York City Community College
1973 - 1998 Independent Textile Designer, New York

Solo Shows

2017 À la recherché du temps perdu. Latin Art Core, Miami, FL
2016 Jose Rosabal Looking forward to the past. 57th Bice Bugatti Segantini Award. Bice Bugatti Club, Villa Brivio, Nova Milanese, Italy
2015 Parallel Paths. Recent Works by Two Cuban Concrete Painters: Salvador Corratgé & Jose Rosabal. Latin Art Core, Miami
1972 Painting & Graphics by Jose Rosabal. Oller Gallery. The Society of Friends of Puerto Rico. Center for Puerto Rican Cultural Relations, New York
1971 Paintings. Dumé Gallery, New York
1965 Rosabal. Dibujos. Galería de Arte Galiano, Havana
1964 Litografías de Canet, Peña, Rosabal. Galería del Grabado “Francisco Javier Báez,” Plaza de la Catedral, Havana
1961 Rosabal. Óleos. Lyceum, Havana
1960 Rosabal. Pintura y Plaka. Asociación de Reporteros de La Habana, Havana
1959 Exposición Rosabal. Galería del Prado, Havana

Selected Group Shows

2017 On the Horizon. Contemporary Cuban Art from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection. Abstracting History. Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL
2016 Concrete Cuba. David Zwirner Gallery, New York / Co-op 2016, Blackbody, New York
2015 Detrás del Muro 2. 12th Havana Bienal. Malecon Ave, Havana / Concrete Cuba. David Zwirner Gallery, London
2014 Panoply: Paintings, Sculpture, Photography. Part 1. ArtSpace Virginia Miller Galleries, Coral Gables
2013 Almacenes Afuera. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / The Silent Shout:

Voices in Cuban Abstraction 1950 -2013. ArtSpace Virginia Miller Galleries, Coral Gables

2011 Reacciones Adversas. La Acacia, Havana

2010 La Otra Realidad. Una Historia del Arte Abstracto Cubano. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana

2002 La Razón de la Poesía. Diez Pintores Concretos Cubanos. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana

1986 Manhattan Community College, New York / Contemporary Print Makers from Latin America. Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MOCHA), New York

1974 Cubans in New York '74. Cisneros Gallery, New York

1973 New York City Community College, New York

1971 Cisneros Gallery, New York / Oller Gallery. The Society of Friends of Puerto Rico. Center for Puerto Rican Cultural Relations, New York

1968 Litografías Cubanas Contemporáneas. Taller Experimental de Gráfica, Havana / Salón Nacional de Dibujo 1967. Galería de La Habana, Havana

1967 Exposición de Litografías. Taller Experimental de Gráfica. Galería de La Habana, Havana / Intergrafik'67. Internationale Grafik Ausstellung. Altes Museum, Berlin /

Grabados Cubanos En Saludo al 26 de Julio y la 1era Conferencia de las OLAS. Galería de La Habana, Havana / Exposición de la Habana. Premios y Menciones. Colección de

Grabados Casa de las Américas, Galería Latinoamericana Casa de las Américas, Havana

1966 Exposición de La Habana 1966. Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana / Exposición Colectiva: Pintura y Escultura. Galería de La Habana, Havana /

Homenaje al “26 de Julio”. Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana

1965 Exposición de La Habana 1965. Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana / Exposición Colectiva de Pintura. Homenaje al XII Aniversario del 26 de Julio. Galería de La Habana, Havana /

Litografías en la Plaza de la Catedral. Tercer Aniversario del T.E.G. Plaza de la Catedral, Havana / Segunda Bienal Americana de Grabado. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Universidad de Chile, Santiago de Chile

1964 Tercer Concurso Latinoamericano de Grabado. Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana / Litografías del Taller Experimental de Gráfica. Centro de Arte Internacional, Havana

1963 Exposición de Litografías TEG. Galería de Arte Galiano, Havana

1961 “A”/Pintura Concreta. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / Exposición de Pintura, Grabado y Cerámica. Primer Congreso Nacional de Escritores y Artistas Cubanos. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana

1960 Segunda Bienal Interamericana de México. Palacio de Bellas Artes, Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, Mexico City

1959 Pintura y Escultura. Galería Habana Sección Cultural 26 de Julio. Arte y Cinema, Havana / Primera Exposición de Artes y Artesanías Cubanas del INIT. Monumento

Martí, Plaza Cívica, Havana / Aristarco O'Reilly, José Rosabal, Lino Pedroso, Miguel Collazo. Galería del Prado, Havana

Salón Anual 1959. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana

Awards

1964 Mention. Tercer Concurso Latinoamericano de Grabado, Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana
1965 Honorable Mention. Exposición de La Habana 1965, Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana
1966 Honorable Mention. Exposición de La Habana 1966, Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana
2016 57° Edizione Internazionale Bice Bugatti – Giovanni Segantini, Premio alla Carrera, Nova Milanese, Italy
Medall Il Presidente della Republica Italiana. Medall of the Libreria Academy, Nova Milanese, Italy

Main Public Collections

Casa de las Américas, Havana / Taller Experimental de Gráfica (TEG), Havana / Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / Museo Cubano, Miami / Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami/ Bice Bugatti Segantini Foundation, Milan/ Nova Milanese /PAMM, Miami



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