

No. 29 AUGUST - OCTOBER 1998

Art Nexus

THE NEXUS BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

BEATRIZ GONZALEZ

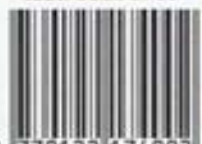
Arnaldo Roche Rabell, Enio Iommi,

Art and Globalization, Cecilia Vicuña,

Sebastião Salgado, Rodrigo Facundo, Mona Hatoum,

Latin American-ization, New Visions in Peruvian Art.

ISSN 0122 1744



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Art, as the theorist Jean Fisher has said, *in its real presence, must communicate something about the experience of our existence and relationships, enabling us to transform our perceptions and understanding of one another and of our realities. For art to be something, it must be seen as a practice that is both aesthetic and ethical, a way of making and remaking reality by both the artist and the spectator.*

Luz Maria Sepulveda

PANAMA

Coqui Calderón

La Galería Arteconsult

The spiritual emotion that has long informed the works of Coqui Calderón appears even more potent in this exhibition of recent paintings. Always concerned with the exploration of nature through close chromatic harmonies, she has moved beyond her familiar abstract expressions of landscape to incorporate poignant and powerful figurations emerging from the depth of the pigment. In tribute to the Great Goddess of Earth and Creation and all She represents in the here and hereafter, these figures are at once part of, and elevated above the land. Captured by the rays of heaven's powers, the female looms with passionate grace and

unbridled authority to dominate each canvas.

Viewers sense themselves gazing through the paint's virtuoso range of colors and textures into the shallow yet infinite space that symbolizes the levels of earthly reality. The images are revealed as lyrical creations of pigment and brushstrokes that run the gamut of emotions. In *Diosa a Rayas*, her characteristic technique of repetitive striping hues gives way to more mystical overtones. *Angel Atado* screams in ecstasy from a mountaintop in one of the most moving of images. In this group of works, the female figure that she has used as a metaphor for life takes on new strength and influence. Through the heightened stylization of chromatic abstraction, Calderón is able to create a finely tuned relationship of forms in space that transcends the ordinary, in keeping with the importance of the subject.

The familiar blue/green palette that Calderón has used for so long to symbolize the verdant power of nature has now given way to a stronger interest in earth tones and deeper contrasts that are far more dramatic. Distant references to outer reality have become more pronounced in form and substance. The contemporary German painter Gerard Richter once asserted that *art is the highest form of hope*. For Coqui Calderón, hope resides in the power of the Goddess and her environment.

Carol Damian

UNITED STATES

MIAMI

Julio Larraz

Boca Raton Museum of Art

The magical images of Julio Larraz are as enigmatic as they are technically beautiful. A master of color and light, Larraz describes the world of everyday reality with the touch of a choreographer designing every move within the rhythm of a musical composition. Born in Cuba, he arrived in the United States as a teenager with no formal training, but a gift for drawing that sustained his career as a caricaturist in New York, and is still evident in the precision of

his painted images. Essentially self-taught, his inspiration came from art books and his prodigious study of art history, especially the Dutch and Spanish masters and American Realists.

Julio Larraz has enjoyed considerable success throughout the Americas, especially in New York where he lived for many years until settling in Miami in the early 90s. Interestingly, this is his first major exhibition in the South Florida area. The exhibition consists of over 40 works of art, including paintings, drawings, and sculpture produced over a period of more than 20 years. It clearly demonstrates the range of aesthetic concerns that the artist has explored over the years and his total dedication to the representation of the objective world.

An astute observer of everything around him, from the seeds in a piece of fruit to the ephemeral nature of clouds and sky, Julio Larraz is in constant contact with the essence of the most ordinary, and extraordinary, of objects. He is fascinated by the concrete aspects of his world and its shapes and forms, and determined to monumentalize and augment his subjects in order to investigate them both physically and psychologically. These subjects include still lifes, landscapes, interiors, and figures, all of which are included in this exhibition.

It is perhaps in his still life arrangements that the true impact of Larraz's particular compositional approach is most evident. Painted in strong vibrant colors and infused with the penetrating light of the tropics, objects assume new importance and take on an arresting sense of presence. In *Study for Jupiter*, a watercolor dated 1994, the focal point is a detail of the curved top of a green squash. In *White Dwarf*, 1997, it is a head of garlic that casts a shadow that is more human than vegetable. His concern is not with the object itself, but with its plastic qualities. Although the strange cropping and compositional arrangements are sometimes disturbing, he is not interested in metaphorical interpretations, but rather with the heightened reality ordi-

Coqui Calderón,
Lined Prose,
1995.
Oil on
canvas.
18 x 14 in.

