
Art in Translation, Volume 3, Issue 1, pp. 69–86
DOI: 10.2752/175613111X12877376766220
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Cosmopolitanism, Cubism and New Art: Latin American Itineraries

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First published in Spanish as
“Cosmopolitismo, Cubismo
y Arte Nuevo. Itinerarios
Latinoamericanos,” *El Cubismo y
sus entornos en las colecciones de
la Fundación Telefónica* (Buenos
Aires: Fundación Telefónica, 2008).

Abstract

This text discusses the Modernist movement, in particular Cubism, within the Latin American context, focusing on the art scenes in Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Mexico, Montevideo, and Santiago de Chile in the first decades of the twentieth century. Informed by a wide range of new primary sources, Wechsler analyzes the complex dynamics and movements of ideas, texts, works, and people, arguing that we need to rethink Modernism in terms of its contributors, artistic itineraries, exchanges and the appropriation of aesthetics within the Latin American and European metropolis. A process of “co-production” and convergence, Modernism is a heterogeneous movement that is shaped by a

plurality of networks of artists and cultural scenes on both sides of the Atlantic. Among the artists discussed are Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rafael Rafael Barradas, Joaquín Torres García, Emilio Pettoruti, Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris, Pablo Curatella Manes, and others.

KEYWORDS: Juan Gris, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rafael Barradas, Joaquín Torres García, Emilio Pettoruti, Pablo Picasso, Vicente Huidobro, Art in Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Mexico, Montevideo, Santiago de Chile, Latin American Art, Modernity, Modernism, Cubism

Introduction by Gabriela Siracusano

This essay first appeared as an introductory text to a 2008 exhibition catalog concerning Cubism and its spread in Latin America. Although the author is very well known for her contribution to the understanding of Modernity in Latin America through numerous articles and books that pre-dated this text, this introduction is an outstanding example of her originality in interrogating Modernity in visual culture. Her contributions to the field regarding the ideas of migration and dialectic of aesthetic ideas, the concept of “other modernities,” the active exchange between artists during the first decades of the twentieth century, have been groundbreaking for the understanding not only of Latin American Modernism but also of Modernism in general.

Weschler’s text addresses the concept of Modernism within the Latin American artistic scene as it had developed in cities like Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Mexico, Montevideo, and Santiago de Chile in the first decades of the twentieth century. On the basis of archival research and the careful scrutiny of the printed sources of the period, she shows the importance of rethinking Modernity in terms of a wide project and new itineraries, exchange and appropriation of aesthetics within the Latin American and European art centers (disregarding the unilateral view of many conventional historiographies), and of a co-production and convergence across many latitudes that produced this “new art.” Through methodologies linked to the sociology of art, the reader is introduced to the actions and mutual interactions of such artists as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rafael Barradas, Joaquín Torres García, Emilio Pettoruti, Pablo Picasso, and Juan Gris.

Cosmopolitanism, Cubism and New Art: Latin American Itineraries

Diana B. Wechsler

Picasso asked me to tell you that if you don’t go, he is coming to see you.

Diego Rivera, *My Art, My Life*, 1960

Cubism as a Project

Rivera and Picasso met in 1914. Their debate on the purposes and the future direction of the “new” art raises a number of questions about the monolithic view of Cubism held by art historians. In the words of Eugenio Carmona, curator of the show *Cubism and its Environment*, Cubism should rather be seen as: “plural, diverse, extended over time, generating multiple poetics, and reconciling nationalities and geographies.”¹

Away from a traditional standpoint, Fundación Telefónica’s Cubist collection embraces plurality to examine “the radiating force of Cubism,” which “not only begat other movements, but above all, acted as a catalyst for ideas and experiences that, although Cubist in origin, evolved into different artistic forms.” Carmona continues:

Cubism had the property of *anaclasis* in the Aristotelian sense, like a prism whose refracted light changes direction but retains an essential link to the original beam. The ability of Cubism to change from within was unique in its time. Although it may seem perhaps excessive to undertake an examination of most of the refraction phenomena that resulted from Cubism, this concept must guide any complex modern understanding of Cubism and any attempt to create a Cubist painting collection that is neither parochial nor dogmatic.²

Cubism is at the center of this collection, like a prism articulating a dialog between its initial proposals and other contemporary movements: Futurism, Expressionism, and the return to figurative art after World War I, what we shall call “new art.” A new art whose common denominator is that it capitalized on previous movements, “from Impressionism to Cubism,” as art scholars claimed in the 1920s, thus revealing their selective view of Western art tradition.

Based on this suggestive curatorial proposal, we propose to raise some questions about modern art at the time of Cubism, seen as a vast process of exchange and migration. To begin, I will give some coordinates from which to reassess several features of Latin American art in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Two Scenes to Frame a Story

In his review of the works exhibited at the second *Salón Nacional de Bellas Artes* in 1912, the Argentinean writer Manuel Gálvez, art critic at *Nosotros* magazine, while deploring the mediocrity and immaturity of [Buenos Aires] artists, was relieved to find no “deliquescence, hysterical Futurism or Cubism or sick and depressing painting.”³

The same magazine published Juan Pablo Echagüe’s review of the *Paris Salon d’Automne*, entitled “The Cubists and the New Art”:⁴ “It appears

the Cubists have again caused uproar with their extravagance,” he wrote, adding that this Salon was similar to the Salon des Indépendants, and that “new tendencies must find free expression.” For him, the Salon d’Automne was less important than the Salon des Artistes Français or the Salón Nacional. About the artists at the Petit Palais, he said: “the Cubists must be classified as brave and well-humored mystifiers.” And in order to update the public in Rio de la Plata on the new developments, he added:

It is no longer about using color in the most strange and difficult manner. It is relief, it is volume, it is the density of bodies that cubes are supposed to represent! Imagine cubes of different colors, juxtaposed and superposed, representing houses, landscapes or women.

To him it was a “pandemonium of quadrangles.” This prejudiced view was not exclusive of those who, like Echagüe, looked at Paris with Latin American eyes. There was resistance to the new art in the European press too. For example, Vauxelles’ review of Braque’s show at Kahnweiler’s gallery, published in *Gil Blas* in November 1908, reflected his bewilderment in similar terms: “He despises form, reduces everything, places, figures and houses to geometric forms, to cubes.”⁵ The new art was also criticized in the media, in newspapers and magazines, such as *Le Figaro* and *L’art moderne*, by one of their most influential critics, Camille Mauclair, who was also a regular contributor to the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación*.

However, apart from Guillaume Apollinaire, who in 1913 collected his texts in *Meditations Esthétiques*, a year after Albert Geizes and Jean Metzinger published *On Cubism* in an attempt to understand and assess the new style, there were others who tried to advance Cubist proposals through different publications, such as the Catalans Eugenio d’Ors and Josep Junoy, whose writings contributed to the early and welcoming reception the movement enjoyed in Barcelona.⁶

Back to the article in *Nosotros* magazine, it pointed to a feature of the 1912 Salon, which we know is typical of Paris: “Two thirds of the exhibitors are foreigners” said the author, and he identified several Argentineans. The Salon, just like the city itself, brought together a vast set of locals and strangers, permanent or temporary, who contributed to the city’s metropolitan character.

Thus, in 1912, we see the emergence of an early debate on modern art in the cultural metropolises, like those on the River Plate. When the new art is shown in different cities during the 1910s, the poor understanding of the exhibited works is often related to Cubism and the other new art forms. The Brazilian critic Monteiro Lobato, for example, wrote about Anita Malfatti exhibition in São Paulo in 1917:

There are two kinds of artists: those who see things normally, and therefore make pure art, in keeping with life’s eternal

rhythms [...] [and] those who see nature abnormally, and interpret it in the light of ephemeral theories, under the squint-eyed perspective of rebel schools. [...] These are the considerations triggered by Ms Malfatti's exhibition, which shows a manifest tendency towards the aesthetic extravagance of Picasso and company.⁷

Years later, at the end of 1934, the Müller Gallery in Buenos Aires opened a selective exhibition of seventy-six works by Pablo Picasso from different periods, including early works—*The Lovers*, from 1905—Cubist pieces, and works like *Three Women at the Fountain* (1921) and *The Bathers* (1926), which exemplify the return (one of many) to the naturalistic figure after World War I. It was not the first time that Picasso's work was exhibited in the city, but this time it had perhaps a greater impact. Several press reviews stressed the market success of the Spanish artist: "Picasso, the most sought-after artist in the world."⁸

The left-wing magazine *Nueva Revista* had many writers as contributors, some of them foreign: Louis Aragon, André Malraux, Ilya Ehrenbourg, Rafael Alberti, María Teresa León, and Antonio Machado. It published the work of George Grosz, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Pablo Picasso, among others. Picasso's show provided a good occasion to take stock and ask: "What do we owe to Cubism?"⁹ and to examine the question of bourgeois art. If during the 1910s the debate hinged on visual elements, on the construction of the image, in the 1930s aesthetics was connected to politics. "There is a causal relationship between art and economics, not a mechanic one, but a dialectic one."¹⁰ Aesthetically, Cubism was considered a reaction against Impressionism, and from this perspective, as a factor in the crisis of capitalism. "Cubism is [...] an art of extreme idealization of the creative process which corresponds to the decline of capitalism." However,

[Cubism] leaves behind an aesthetics, a technical heritage that goes beyond the limits of the society that produced it and offers revolutionary artists the elements for an art whose content belongs to the class that both inherited and rejected capitalism, the proletariat, the only one that can give real meaning to art, turning it into something concrete and alive.¹¹

The analysis concludes with an assessment of Picasso's impact on Mexican painters Rivera and Siqueiros, "who appear as an expression of agrarian and anti-imperialist struggle." The author believes that Picasso's work should be studied from the perspective of the "revolutionary class conscience," since the work of a proletarian artist is to be a "battering ram against the power of landowners and capitalists."¹²

The years between 1912 and 1934 offer a possible framework within which to examine the process of circulation and reception of what could be defined as "news about Cubism" in some of the modern metropolises

of the region. Both dates can also be used to frame the presence of Latin American artists in Paris and other European modern art scenes, their artistic development, and their relationship to Cubism.

The formal space for visual arts in the main Latin American cities (Buenos Aires, Mexico, São Paulo, Montevideo, Santiago) was developed and consolidated during the 1910s and 1920s, with the emergence of a growing international market for painting (mainly European: Spanish, Italian, French) and the appearance of training and promotion institutions, art criticism, etc. It was the time of the modern debate, with local variations.

Particularly in Latin America, this debate had other dimensions, such as the development of a national and regional identity that placed our countries within the Western world. It is possible then to affirm that the modern debate on the visual arts took place within the process of integration of the Latin American metropolises in a wider modern project, connecting different cultural spaces through a process of exchange that could be called, already in the 1930s, a globalized modern culture.

For this reason, the title of this essay includes in succession the terms: “cosmopolitanism,” “Cubism,” and “new art,” understood here as constitutive parts of the process of integration of Latin American metropolises in a modern project, intertwined with the social and cultural situation of our countries. As Marshall Berman has suggested, this modern project has to be seen as an integral and integrative process. In his own words, “in the 20th century the modernization project reaches the entire world, and the global culture of modernism achieves spectacular breakthroughs in art and thought.”

Berman recognizes the dialectics of Modernity with its dynamic tensions, the ebb and flow of the old and the new, the past and the present, with new traditions developing every day. But the process is not homogeneous, as he seems to suggest.¹³ Perry Anderson is right to point out that we should take into account the specific characteristics of this modern process in each context.¹⁴ Anderson speaks of a “complex and differential temporality, in which episodes or epochs are discontinuous and heterogeneous in themselves.” I would like to situate our analysis within this tension between, on the one hand, a heterogeneous period where diverse temporalities overlap and coexist and, on the other, the development of processes aimed at a global reach, such as the modern project.

Here I propose to attempt a reading of Modernity and of modern art as a process of co-production, of convergence, shaped by the participation of actors and cultural scenes from different latitudes. We could introduce here Raúl Antelo’s suggestive proposal of “another politics of time, that of anachronism,” which entails, “at the same time, the unequivocal singularity of events and the ambivalent plurality of networks.”¹⁵ Along the lines of George Didi-Huberman’s ideas, Antelo claims that we need to be aware that history can only be anachronistic

(through assembly) and that we can only aspire to a history of anachronisms (through the symptoms).¹⁶

I am proposing a new interpretation of the process of consolidation of the modern project in the first decades of the twentieth century and of the position of the Latin American metropolises within it. And in order to do so, I deem it necessary to question the artistic historiography of that period. Thus, we should revise the construction of the historiographical account of modern art in order to resituate within it the Latin American itineraries.

Finally, in order to close this introduction, where I have suggested several milestones that provide a conceptual delimitation of my thesis, I would like to explain the notion of “itinerary,” which besides being a metaphorical allusion to the artistic development of Latin American artists, it also refers to specific journeys in space, from America to Europe and vice versa, that they undertook as part of the modern project.

I propose to envision these Latin American itineraries within the conceptual space provided by migrations, images, texts, persons, and ideas, in order to reflect on the contemporary dynamics.

Migrations

*Despite being immured, the CRUZ DEL SUR is the only
airplane that remains.*

Vicente Huidobro
Last lines of “Airplane” in *Horizon Carré*, 1917

At the end of 1916, Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro boarded a ship in Buenos Aires bound for Europe. First he was in Madrid—he would return several times in those years—where he made literary contact with Guillermo de Torre, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, and Jorge Luis Borges, and then he went to Paris.

“To the poet Vicente Huidobro, who invented modern poetry without knowing the result of the European effort and who already has a place among us.”¹⁷ Max Jacob signed this dedication to Huidobro on his book *Le Cornet à dés* (1916), one of the volumes found in the section of Huidobro’s library devoted to the years between World War I and the Russian revolution. Jacob’s words are evidence of the mutual understanding that existed between the Chilean poet and the artists and writers that he met in Europe, including Juan Gris, Pablo Picasso, Jacques Lipchitz, Diego Rivera, Tristan Tzara, Jean Cocteau, André Breton, and Louis Aragon.

Huidobro became a contributor to the newly founded magazine *Nord-Sud*, along with some of these artists; his book *Horizon Carré* contained illustrations by Juan Gris. Since 1912 he had begun to work

on what he would later call creationism, a notion that he would develop in his writings and public appearances. Years later he said: “I was part of the Cubist group, the only one of vital importance in the history of contemporary art.”¹⁸ Along with Huidobro’s manifest empathy with the group of modern artists, the image of the Cruz del Sur from the last lines of the poem above—the only airplane that endures—resounded in a Europe at war as a hopeful look in the direction of a possible life project.

Years later, in 1936, Joaquín Torres García’s famously provocative gesture of inverting the American map, declaring “Our north is the South” emphasizes the regional dimension, which is part of the development of the modern project in the imagination of Latin American artists and intellectuals. In fact, not only in their imagination, but that is another story.

Back to Huidobro, he quickly found his place in relation to other artists from different origins, as did Rivera. The same applies to the itineraries of other migrants to Paris and other European metropolises: as they became integrated in the framework of European art, these Latin American artists also developed links that resulted in a paradoxical encounter in these metropolitan spaces that activated both their self-perception as “the other,” and the identification of “kinship.” Paris, a modern Babel, revealed the alienness of all, something we can infer from Echagüe’s review, and from his attempt to identify “French art” in the Salon d’Automne by inquiring into the nationality of the exhibitors.

“The artist of today must travel so that new worlds infiltrate into his soul.”¹⁹ This statement by the Lithuanian painter Lasar Segall summarizes some of the reasons for his “nomadism,” which, although different from the Latin American itineraries, supports the idea of a particular kind of migration as a constitutive element of the modern movement. Born in the Vilnius ghetto and trained in Berlin and Dresden, Segall was a member of the Secession and of the Expressionist groups. He moved to Germany first, then within Germany and finally to Paris. But his nomadism also had a peculiar feature: he had his first show in São Paulo in 1913, and in 1923 he joined the Modernist movement in Brazil, where he stayed for a few years, until 1928, when he moved to Paris and then back to São Paulo in 1932.

Segall, like Rivera, Torres García, Pettoruti, Barradas, and so many modern nomads, came to Paris, but they also visited Berlin, Dresden, Milan, Barcelona, Madrid, Brussels, thus adding to the map of modern metropolises, which, as singular cultural spaces, constituted the key cultural factor of Modernist change and had a decisive impact on formal issues. A great deal of activity took place in these cities, along with the circulation of cultural and symbolic goods, which attracted people from the most diverse and remote geographical backgrounds: modern nomadism. Large cities highlight differences, giving a special focus to language and to the notion of the other. The effect of the metropolis on the immigrant is, as Williams points out, “a decisive aesthetic effect”

which goes beyond language. In fact, language is then perceived in a totally different way, it becomes denaturalized, an object of reflection. To this we have to add a peculiarity of the metropolis, its increased mobility and its social and cultural diversity, which also favors the expansion of these “metropolitan forms.”²⁰

Likewise, and partly for the same reason, metropolises can also interact, so that the “central” ones, like Paris, Berlin, or Milan, for example, maintain an intense exchange with the “peripheries,” like Madrid, Barcelona, or Brussels, in Europe, or Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Santiago de Chile, or Mexico City in Latin America. I propose that we focus on these transfers between metropolises and that we call into question the accounts, the interpretation, self-representation, and representation of the other in these centers as “universal processes.”

In this sense, the notion of travel is key in order to rethink the history of modern art, especially in the first decades of the twentieth century. For this reason, the massive presence of “the other” in metropolitan centers like Paris can be seen as a constitutive element of modern art. According to the traditional view of art history, Modernity is “generated” in the centers and then spreads out in a process of “diffusion.” However, a fresh look at the presence of artists and intellectuals in peripheral metropolises can give us a wider perspective of this process.

Elements for a Different History of Modern Art

Crossing over borders, penetrating other worlds and other languages, incorporating new experiences, interacting with other artists and intellectuals because exceptional things were happening in those metropolitan spaces, things that had to be experienced there, these are the keys that explain travel in the biographies of Latin American artists. In the metropolises on the periphery, newspapers and magazines reported on everything that happened in Paris, London, Milan, Venice, Berlin, Munich, Madrid in order to keep their art and culture pages to “up to date.” Artists and intellectuals were also swamped by a desire to keep abreast of the developments. More or less compulsively, they filled their libraries with magazines, books, catalogs, and postcards, any printed material to stay informed of what was happening on the other side of the ocean. And always with an agonizing feeling that anyway all that effort was in vain since—as one often reads in autobiographies—“nothing ever reaches us here.” These readings would allow them to draw an imaginary map to be explored when they could undertake the hoped-for “trip to Europe.” And “Europe” could start anywhere: it could be the port of arrival of the steamboat—London, Genoa, Vigo, Hamburg—or the strongest personal link (based on family tradition, the teaching of their masters, previous contact with a colleague who had been or was still there). It seems that what mattered in the experience of travel was

the possibility of facing “the other” in order to “see oneself,” to measure oneself against the other and to assess the course to follow.

The overlapping of the itineraries they followed reveals certain meeting points within each of the cities of choice: a neighborhood, a café, an atelier, a master, a gallery owner, an exhibition, a museum. This community makes it possible to identify, at least within the two decades that are the focus of this essay, a certain recurrence, through which we can imagine encounters and exchanges, and establish networks linking artists from Argentina, Spain, France, Chile, Belgium, Mexico, Lithuania, Brazil, Uruguay ... And thus, besides discovering the other, they can also discover themselves.

Rivera mentions Madrid as the first stop in his itinerary, between 1907 and 1909, then Paris until 1921, although he often traveled back to Spain, partly because of his relationship with Ramón Gómez de la Serna, who, as an early advocate of the new art, proposed to organize an exhibition of *Los Pintores Integros* in Madrid, with the participation of Rivera and Maria Blanchard, towards 1915. Ramón defined Rivera’s work and his own take on Cubism as “riverism.” Gómez de la Serna’s “isms” reveal his own taste and, in this case, his closeness to this artist, which allowed him to coin another ism: “These are the paradoxes of art mocking reality itself! Long live newportraiture!” He referred to a Cubist portrait of Ramón that Rivera made in 1915, and exhibited in the above-mentioned show. “My portrait by Diego is a true portrait [...] Cubist painting, that loves space above all, has not put me in a bottle, it rather made me free and natural.”²¹

Another Latin American artist, Rafael Barradas, arrived in Madrid towards 1914. He would also join the ranks of the new art, but his itinerary had begun a year before, when he arrived in Milan from Montevideo. Then he moved to Paris, where he came into contact with Cubist and Futurist painting. Later he moved to Barcelona and then he decided to walk to Madrid, although he spent a year in Saragossa. In 1916 he was in Barcelona, where he met Joaquín Torres García, Celso Lagar, Dalmau, and Joan Miró. He continued to work as an illustrator there, but he also developed, as Carmona points out, “a personal ism,” vibrationism, “a personal synthesis of resources from the first isms,”²² undeniably a combination of Futurist and Cubist proposals. He went to Madrid in 1919, where he could debate the new art with Ultraists like De Torre, the Borges brothers, De la Serna, and others.

Emilio Pettoruti, of Italian ancestry, stayed in Italy between 1913 and 1924, mainly in Florence, but he also spent time in Rome, where he met Balla, De Chirico, Bragaglia, and Prampolini; in Milan, where he was warmly welcomed by Piero Marusig, Mario Sironi, Adolfo Wildt, Dino Campana, Achille Funi, and Fortunato Depero; in Berlin, where his work was showcased by *Der Sturm*, with a catalog prefaced by Carrà; and in Paris, where he came into contact with Picasso, Juan Gris, Manuel Ángeles Ortiz, and others.

He did not lose contact with Buenos Aires while he was away: he kept sending his work, whose new approach was seen by the local critics in 1916 as “merely geometric” forms.²³ At the same time he took part in key initiatives within the international modern art scene, such as the participation of young modern artists in the 12th Biennale Internazionale di Venezia in 1920. In other cases he was also rejected, along with his colleagues. For example, he and Marusig were excluded from the Biennale di Brera that took place the same year. Instead, they exhibited their work at the Milan Famiglia Artistica, which had great impact on the press. “Those excluded from the Biennale di Brera,” says *Risorgimento* newspaper from Milan in 1920, “have opened a show at the Famiglia Artística. What does this exhibition prove? [...] the human eye cannot discern any artistic consideration that justifies their rejection by the jury. See for yourself two paintings by Pettoruti in the large room, their artistic strength, their confident use of color, it is serious and refined work.”²⁴

While in Europe he imagined his homecoming to Buenos Aires, which he carefully planned. He designed his strategy using different resources: first he announced his arrival in the local art press, predicting that, upon his return, “he would not be understood.”²⁵ He resumed contact with his colleagues and—along with his friend Xul Solar and sculptor Pablo Curatella Manes, also in Europe at the time—joined the Martín Fierro group, named after the magazine that served as the nucleus for the young artists with a “new sensibility.” He also organized an important exhibition showcasing eighty-six works at the prestigious Witcomb gallery in October 1924, three months after his return to Argentina. And finally he sent his work to the Salón Nacional, the official art venue.

He achieved his goal and had a great impact. His return was a success and was included in the canon of art history as the most significant event in the emergence of the first avant-garde in Argentina. In the words of Xul Solar in an article published by *Martín Fierro*: “a clear and solid architecture,” “a wide new perspective,” “Pettoruti’s serious effort” would bring “relief and liberation.” “The courage of this painter will set an example,” he wrote.²⁶ The magazine of the new generation said: “It is up to an Argentinean to launch the arduous crusade in support of the new art form.”²⁷

As in any other historical process, nothing happens in isolation. Pettoruti’s seed fell on fertile ground. The new art announced itself from different positions and his multiple presentation, backed by artists, poets, and intellectuals with a “new sensibility,” kindled the fire of the debate on modern art in Argentina, which would never go out. His colleagues Curatella Manes and Xul Solar also came back in 1924 (the former remained in Paris, but had an individual exhibition in Buenos Aires). Their shows added to the impact that the new art had in Buenos Aires.²⁸

More travelers kept arriving in Europe. Some Chilean artists came to Paris and joined Huidobro, who in 1914 had laid the foundation stone for artistic disobedience in Santiago de Chile with his proclamation: “Non serviam.” Luis Vargas Rosas went to Italy in 1919 and then he spent time in Paris, Munich, and Paris again, before he returned to Santiago in 1923, where he founded the Montparnasse group, along with other fellow travelers: his wife Henriette Petit, the Ortiz de Zárate brothers, José Perotti, and Camilo Mori. They had participated in the Salon des Indépendants in 1919, they had met Juan Gris, and they explored Cubism, Futurism, Fauvism, and Cézanne’s teachings, the latter being the focus of the inaugural show in Chile in 1923.

Years before, Vicente do Rego Monteiro “had begun to practice in Paris a stylized post-Cubism using a limited palette.”²⁹ His work was closely linked to that of his colleague, Brazilian sculptor Victor Brecheret—another modern nomad—and it is the result of an evolution that began in Rio de Janeiro and continued in Paris between 1911 and 1914. Like so many other artists, he found in the free ateliers the resources he needed to develop a new perspective: he frequented the Colarossi, Julien, and Grande Chaumière academies, as did the Chilean artists mentioned above. However, their training went beyond the institutional spaces: they visited museums, collections, exhibitions, other artists’ ateliers, and attended artistic gatherings at the cafés.

Rego Monteiro, who was in touch with Cubism and the new art, exhibited his work at the Salon des Indépendants in 1913 and in other shows in subsequent years. He met Amadeo Modigliani, Fernand Léger, Georges Braque, Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, and Louis Marcoussis in Paris, and became fully attached to the modern movement. He returned to Brazil in 1915, spending time in Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and São Paulo.

The emergence of the modern movement in Brazil was first visible in São Paulo. Lasar Segall’s exhibition in 1913 and the controversial 1917 exhibition by newcomer Anita Malfatti were the first indication of a change in the São Paulo art scene. Rego exhibited there for the first time in 1920, and his show gave him visibility among the public receptive to modern art, and among the artists, poets, and intellectuals who were already promoting it: Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, Víctor Brecheret, Mario and Oswald de Andrade, and others.

The need to embrace a new perspective, both in terms of form and content, was partly behind the organization of the influential *Semana de Arte Moderna* in São Paulo in February 1922, which marked the beginning of the modern movement for Brazilian artists, musicians, poets, and intellectuals. Rego Monteiro, although back in Paris, exhibited several works at the show, along with Anita Malfatti, the Swiss painter Amadeo Graz (who lived in Brazil), his wife Regina Gomide, Di Cavalcanti, etc.

Di Cavalcanti went to Paris in 1923. Other Brazilian artists were already there: Ismael Nery, Rego Monteiro (on his second visit), Tarsila de Amaral. Tarsila visited the ateliers of Lhote, Gleizes, and Léger;³⁰ Rego Monteiro made new contacts. He exhibited his work at Léonce Rosenberg's gallery and contributed to the magazine *L'Effort moderne*. In 1930 he participated in an exhibition organized by Joaquín Torres García at the Zak gallery, the first group show of modern Latin American artists in Paris, including work by Rivera and Castellanos from Mexico, Forner, Cochet, and Del Prete from Argentina, Figari from Uruguay, and Torres-García himself.

The idea that the modern movement should link different geographical areas led to the development of projects such as Monteiro's initiative to assemble different modern artists. He also organized what historian Walter Zannini considered the first international modern art show in Brazil, with works by Picasso, Léger, Braque, Miró, Severini, and the Brazilians Tarsila do Amaral and Rego Monteiro.

There was also the Picasso show in Buenos Aires in 1934, mentioned above, along with other "Modern French Art" exhibitions. Private collections from Argentina and São Paulo also acquired work by "Cubist and related" artists, another element to be taken into account in these itineraries. The map of the modern metropolises did not include one-way routes, a factor that becomes increasingly clear as we advance in our investigation.

About Cubism: Coda

So far we have proposed some elements for a revision of the traditional account of modern art, by looking at the itineraries of several Latin American artists during the 1910s. The situation continues in the 1920s, reinforced by the circulation, not just of individual artists, but also of works, texts, contacts, and publications between both sides of the Atlantic. A detailed enumeration of these movements, from the 1910s and 1920s, will help to support our thesis.

A photograph of *Forma Primaria*, by the Argentinean sculptor Pablo Curatella Manes, appeared in the dossier on new art published by Parisian magazine *Cahiers d'art* in 1926. *Figura de espaldas*, by the Spanish artist Salvador Dalí, was first published by the newspaper *La prensa* from Buenos Aires in 1925. The backroom catalog of the Zak gallery in Paris in the second half of the 1920s included young artists from Spain, Argentina, and Mexico, among others. Juan Del Prete arrived in Paris in 1928 and joined the Abstraction-Creation group in his first exhibition in the city. As Eugenio Carmona pointed out a few years ago, the Spanish painter Manuel Ángeles Ortiz remembered in his old age that he had been introduced to Picasso in Paris by the Argentinean painter Emilio Pettoruti.³¹

A few years before, the Mexican Diego Rivera had incorporated Cubist aesthetics into his work, from his national perspective. In Paris, Rivera met David Alfaro Siqueiros, his partner in the Muralist movement. In 1921, Siqueiros launched the magazine *Vida Americana* in Barcelona. This magazine published “Three Appeals to the Painters and Sculptors of the New Generation,” the foundation text of the Mexican artistic revolution. Rivera and Torres García also contributed to the magazine. Paris was the epicenter, but, as we said before, other spaces also held an attraction. Xul Solar, Emilio Pettoruti, and Vargas Rosas, for example, went to Germany, among other places. Pettoruti traveled not just to acquire training, he in fact became a member of the local “art family” in Florence, Milan, Venice, Rome, and was considered a young Italian modern artist.

The fact that Torres-García and Barradas became part of the art scene in Spain, Paris, New York and then went back to Uruguay reinforces the picture I have tried to draw with this long enumeration: the active circulation of artists and their works from the center to the periphery, their assimilation of contemporary art trends and their membership of contemporary groups. Apart from a list of artists from different areas who came to the cultural centers, we could add more evidence to support the hypothesis that Paris, cultural metropolis, attracted artists and intellectuals from different latitudes, a notion often repeated in the historiography of modern art.

But we propose to go a little further. For some reason, an interesting fact has often been ignored both in the biographies of the artists and in the construction of the narratives of modern art both in Latin America and in Europe: the foreigners who came to Paris, and to other cultural centers, were not just interested in the consumption of cultural goods. Rather, they went on the mythical “aesthetic journey” of “aggiornamento,” and then carried that baggage back to their cities of origin.

A close reading of the facts, along with a new examination of archival material and other sources hitherto ignored or not studied in this light, suggests a more active and dialectic process involving the circulation of images and people from different areas. Thus, it could be said that these brief migrations—or not so brief in some cases—of artists and intellectuals to Paris and other centers, are important not only because of the impact they had on the lives of these Latin American travelers, but also in terms of the effect that their presence had within these active cultural centers.

Finally, the works in the Telefonica Cubist collection provide visual confirmation of the shared experiences, the presences, the movements, the differential adoption, and the explorations that took place in the 1910s and the 1920s, around the set of problems posed by Cubism, by calling into question the basis for visual representation prevalent in the West since the Renaissance.

A comparison of the still lifes by Juan Gris and Pettoruti and those by Blanchard, Lhote, Mezinger, Barradas, Gontcharova, and Exter, for example, reveals a number of similarities in the use of the plane, the simultaneous points of view, and, in some cases, their palette. We can also see the alternative routes they followed: some preferred orthogonal composition, others divergent diagonals, Barradas used vibrant colors and open forms, others chose different technical options to convey the idea of the painting as an object, to mention just some of the characteristics of the works from the 1910s. The works by Gris, Rego Monteiro, or Ángeles Ortiz, from the 1920s, exemplify the return to figurative form.

The different forms of Cubism, or “Cubism and its environment”—both as a collection and a theoretical and critical proposition—open the door to other interpretations that supplement the great modern narrative, not only with the presence of Latin American artists, but Russians, North Americans, Spaniards, who also contributed to the development of the modern imagination.

Notes

1. Eugenio Carmona, “Fondo y figura del Cubismo y sus entornos,” in *El Cubismo y sus entornos en las colecciones de Telefónica*, (Madrid: Fundación Telefónica, 2004) p. 23.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.
3. Manuel Gálvez, “Pintura y escultura. La Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes,” *Nosotros*, vol. IX (Buenos Aires, October 1912), pp. 79–95.
4. Juan Pablo Echagüe, “Los Cubistas y el arte nuevo,” *Nosotros*, vol. IX (Buenos Aires, October 1912), pp. 137–41.
5. Louis Vauxelles, “Braque à la Galerie Kahnweiler,” *Gil Blas*, November 14, 1908, cited by Simón Marchan Fiz in “Meditaciones estéticas sobre las poéticas del Cubismo,” in *El Cubismo y sus entornos*, p. 27.
6. See, for example, Eugenio D’Ors (pseudonym Xenius), “Del Cubisme,” in *Glosari, La Veu de Catalunya*, Barcelona, October 9, 1911, on the 1911 Salon of Paris (in Laura Mercader, Martí Peran and Natalia Bravo, *Eugenio d’Ors, Del arte a la letra*, Monografías de Arte Contemporáneo 3, Madrid: MNCARS, 1997 pp. 58–9), and Josep Junoy, “Introducción a los tres semblantes de Jean Metzinger,” in *La publicidad*, Barcelona, October 24, 1911 (in Merce Vidal, *1912. L’Exposició d’Art Cubista a les Galeries Dalmau*, Universitat de Barcelona, FBA, 1996, p. 25).
7. Monteiro Lobato, “A propósito de la exposición Malfatti: paranoia o mixtificación,” in *O Estado de São Paulo*, evening edition, São Paulo, December 20, 1917, in *Amaral, Aracy, Arte y arquitectura*

- del modernismo brasileño (1917–1930)* (Caracas: Biblioteca de Ayacucho, 1978) pp. 177–80.
8. Eduardo Eiriz Maglione, “El pintor más revolucionario del siglo XX, inventor del Cubismo, expone en Buenos Aires,” *La Razón*, Buenos Aires, Friday November 2, 1934, Archivo Spilimbergo, Buenos Aires.
 9. “Qué le debemos al Cubismo?,” *Nueva Revista*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (January 1935).
 10. Ibid.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Marshall Berman, *Todo lo sólido se desvanece en el aire. La experiencia de la modernidad* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1988); first published as *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster); “Brindis por la modernidad,” in *Nexos*, no. 9 (Mexico, May 1985).
 14. Perry Anderson, “Modernidad y revolución,” in *Leviatán*, no. 16 (Madrid, summer 1984).
 15. Raúl Antelo, *Tempos de Babel. Anacronismo e destruição* (São Paulo: Lumme Editor, 2007) p. 58.
 16. Ibid., p. 38; see also Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ante el tiempo* (Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo, 2006)
 17. Juan Manuel Bonet, “Vicente Huidobro: lo que nos dice su biblioteca,” in Carlos Pérez and Miguel Valle Inclán, *Vicente Huidobro y las artes plásticas* (Madrid, MNCARS, 2001) p. 96.
 18. Huidobro’s interview with Carlos Vattier for *Hoy* magazine, Santiago de Chile, in Bonet, Ibid., p. 95.
 19. Lasar Segall 1939, cited in Vera D’Orta (curator), *Lasar Segall, un expresionista brasileño* (Buenos Aires: Malba, 2002).
 20. Raymond Williams, *La política del modernismo* (Buenos Aires: Manantial, 1997), pp. 57–69.
 21. Ramón Gómez de la Serna, *Ismos* (Buenos Aires: Brújula, 1968), pp. 313–28. For a detailed study of this work, see Juan Manuel Bonet and Carlos Pérez (curators), *Los ismos de Ramón Gómez de la Serna* (Madrid: MNCARS-Seacex, 2002).
 22. Eurgenio Carmona, “Rafael Barradas,” in *El Cubismo sus entornos en las colecciones de Telefónica*, pp. 67–85; also, on this author, see Jaime Brihuega and Concha Lomba, *Barradas. Exposición antológica, 1890–1929* (Saragossa, 1992).
 23. On his work *Armonías* in the decorative arts section of El Salón Nacional, see *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, September 22, 1916.
 24. *Risorgimento*, Milano, October 14, 1920, cited by Cayetano Córdova Iturburu, *Emilio Pettoruti* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, Ministerio de Educación y Justicia, Dirección General de Cultura, 1963) p.77.

25. “*Atlántida* en Europa. Argentinos en Berlín. El pintor Emilio Pettoruti.” Emilio Pettoruti, interviewed by Julio de la Paz, *Atlántida*, Buenos Aires, February 8, 1924.
26. Xul Solar, “Pettoruti,” in *Martín Fierro*, Buenos Aires, September/October 1924.
27. Pedro Blake, “Pettoruti,” in *Martín Fierro*, Buenos Aires, November 20, 1924.
28. Diana B. Wechsler, “Buenos Aires 1924: Trayectoria pública de la doble presentación de Emilio Pettoruti,” in *El arte entre lo público y lo privado* (Buenos Aires: CAIA, 1995).
29. Aracy Amaral, “Del premodernismo a la Bienal: pintura brasileña (1900–1950),” in *Pintura Latinoamericana* (Buenos Aires, Ediciones Velox, 1999) p. 33.
30. Amaral Aracy, *Tarsila: sua obra e seu tempo* (São Paulo, Perspectiva/Edusp, 1975) and Irma Arestizábal, *Tarsila, Frida and Amélia*, (Madrid, La Caixa, 1997).
31. Eugenio Carmona, “Manuel Ángeles Ortiz en los años del ‘Arte Nuevo’ 1918–1939,” in Lina Davidov and Eugenio Carmona (curators), *Manuel Ángeles Ortiz* (Madrid, MNCARS, 1996) pp. 17–38.

