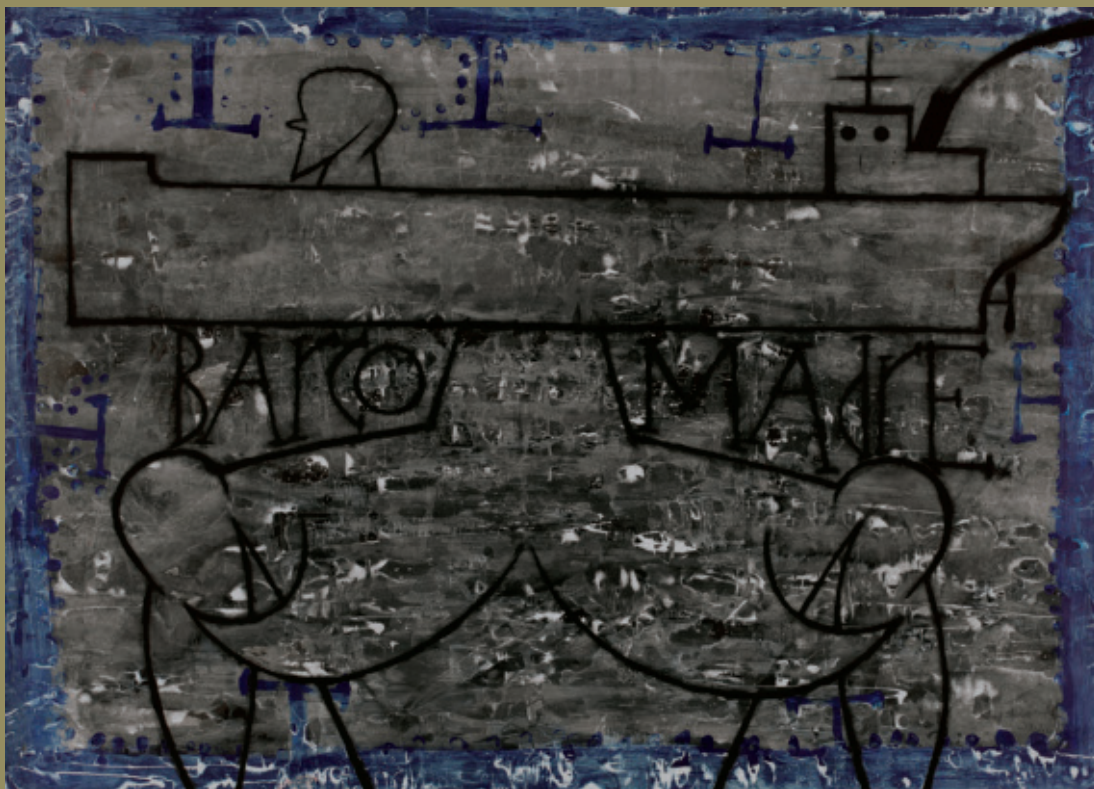


Fluid Ecologies:
Hispanic Caribbean Art from
the Permanent Collection

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Vassar College
January 26 – May 8, 2016



Checklist no. 1

Front cover, Checklist no. 6

Back cover, Checklist no. 7

Fluid Ecologies: Hispanic Caribbean Art from the Permanent Collection

*The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own,
serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary.*

— Gabriel García Márquez

In a Caribbean region “fissured by histories,”¹ where the crossroads has become a familiar metaphor for the multiple crossing and bifurcating paths responsible for the development of our cultures, creativity is nurtured by the ebb and flow of intellectual and physical currents that move artists and ideas across the sea, its islands, and continental shores. Like a fluid ecology forever interacting to generate the whole—rooted in a particular geographic environment in which no place or person is ever too far from the sea that defines it—Caribbean art is protean, hybrid, mercurial, yet always anchored in its historical and cultural environment. The salient markers of the region’s history—a fateful European encounter, forced migrations, slavery, the plantation, a troublesome dependence on tourism, the slow violence of environmental mismanagement, never-ending cycles of diasporan departures and returns—flow in and out of Caribbean art, like *revenants* who reemerge fortified with renewed powers of invention.

When the focus of the art world turned south in the 1960s—thanks in great part to the work of Vassar alumna Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, who used her position on the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art to promote art exchanges between the United States and Latin America—it shone its spotlight on a burgeoning artistic and intellectual world that had already begun to make its international mark through the unprecedented success of writers like Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia, 1927–2014), Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru, b. 1936) and Carlos Fuentes (Mexico, 1928–2012), among others. The Latin American literary Boom that brought us the inventiveness and marvelous reality of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) and allowed us to rediscover the marvels of the Haitian Revolution in Alejo Carpentier’s *The Kingdom of This World* (1949) served as an invitation to explore the visual manifestations of a creativity stemming from an expressive hybridity where indigenous, African, Asian, and European cultural elements and aesthetic principles coalesced. St. Lucian Nobel-Prize-winning poet Derek Walcott (b. 1930) claimed magical realism “as the authoritative aesthetic response to the Caribbean cultural context” from which his own work emerged, a pivotal aspect of “a much larger strategy of cultural mixing—a creolization or transculturation” rendered visually in works like Wifredo Lam’s *The Jungle* (1943, Museum of Modern Art; Fig. 1).² Lam (Cuba, 1902–1982) beautifully embodies the transculturation of which Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz wrote in *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (1947)—the complex phenomena through which different cultures merge and converge. His work seamlessly encompasses the Surrealism he had embraced while studying in Madrid and Paris, the influence of his mentor and

friend Pablo Picasso and his fellow Cubists, the iconography and belief systems of African-derived religions like Haitian *Vodou* and Cuban *Santería*,³ his own familial legacy as the descendant of indentured Chinese workers in Cuba, and a lifelong interest in the tropical botany that often served as a backdrop to his paintings.

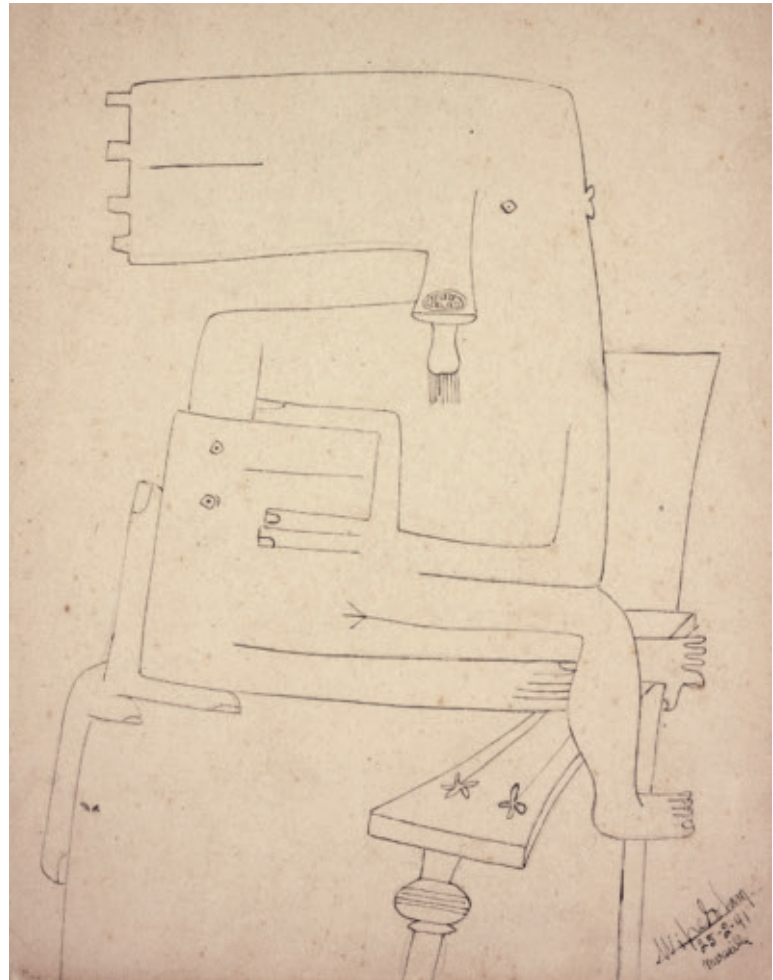
The 1960s and '70s—the decades that marked the emergence of Latin American and Hispanic Caribbean art in United States museums and galleries—were years of intense political turmoil. Against the background of the Cold War, the triumph of the Cuban Revolution (1959), and the coup against Chile's Salvador Allende (1973), the continent and the Caribbean archipelago waged struggles against human rights abuses and political terror, witnessed the deposition of dictators by urban and rural guerrillas, and adapted to the accelerated growth of cities and the growing importance of mass media. The prevailing political conditions made writers and artists acutely aware of social inequality and its role in fostering political instability. Lam, perhaps the most influential figure for subsequent generations of Hispanic Caribbean artists, gave voice to this social engagement when he spoke of “wanting with all my heart to paint the drama of my country, but by thoroughly expressing the negro [sic] spirit, the beauty of the plastic arts of the blacks. In this way I could act as a Trojan horse that would spew forth hallucinating figures with the power to surprise, to disturb the dreams of the exploiters.”⁴ The emergence of the artist as a politically committed intellectual proposed by Lam, built upon a belief in “the autonomy of art itself as a critical practice,”⁵ ultimately would push Hispanic Caribbean artists into waves of forced or voluntary exile to Europe or—in the case of most of the artists represented in this exhibition—to the United States. Flowing in and out of their natural political and aesthetic ecologies, constructing their work out of the flotsam and jetsam of history and geography, they embodied the acute tensions between “art-making as an anarchic, deeply individualist process and the necessarily collective nature of political action.”⁶ In the process, their art, through its ability to move fluidly across myriad spaces, challenged binary hegemonic constructs that sought to relegate it to the periphery, asserting a geographical claim to its origins at the crossroads of the world.

In their comings and goings from center to periphery, contemporary Hispanic Caribbean artists had no better model than Lam himself, represented in this exhibition by one of three dozen preparatory drawings in China ink and parchment paper he produced at André Breton's invitation to illustrate *Fata Morgana* (1942), a book-length poem dedicated to the writer's wife, Surrealist artist Jacqueline Lamba-Breton.⁷ Drawn during the period when Breton, his family, and Lam had sought refuge in Marseille while awaiting passage to Martinique en route to Cuba and the United States, the drawings selected for inclusion in the book are characterized by repeated iterations of “a fragmented and deformed human figure, visible sexual attributes, a tense or openly violent relationship between the composition's elements... long hair like streams of water, vegetable motifs and masked games.”⁸ The fine, delicate lines of the drawing in the Vassar collection correspond with those of the rest of the series, but not the placid composure of its androgynous rendition of the classic Madonna and Child pose. Absent the delirium, fragmentation, sexual attributes, and otherworldliness of the drawings featured in the book, this image of maternal tenderness evokes the close relationship between Breton and his daughter, his “dear little fairy” Aube (the artist Aube Breton-Elléouët, b. 1935), with whom he was often photographed during their stay in Marseille, most frequently in her father's



Figure 1

Wifredo Lam, *The Jungle*, 1943
 Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
 94 1/4 x 90 1/2 in. (239.4 x 229.9 cm)
 ©The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by
 SCALA / Art Resource, NY and 2016 Artists
 Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



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arms. His father's constant companion—if we are to believe the photographic record—and the only child in their Marseille circles, it is tempting to imagine Vassar's Lam drawing as capturing a moment in the enduring affection between five-year-old Aube and a tender father who had once proclaimed his absolute opposition to the idea of a family, declaring that "if it ever happened to me despite everything, I would make sure I never met the child."⁹

Lam and his companions in Marseille—Aube included—set off in March 1941 in the steamer *Capitaine Paul-Lemerle* on an Atlantic crossing that would bring them to Martinique, where a momentous encounter with Martinican poet Aimé Césaire, author of *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook on a Return to the Native Country*, 1939) and later of the influential *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955) would bring the travelers into the world of postcolonial theory, *négritude* (the anti-colonial philosophy that encouraged the unification of Africa and its Diaspora under a common racial identity) and the centrality of the tropical environment for artistic creativity in the region. For Lam it was a transformative experience, particularly his discovery of "the savage beauty of the island, the generous slope of its mountains, rich with varied, dense vegetation, overflowing with life, with sap, making each plant swell, [and] fantastical intertwining and tangled trees."¹⁰ His subsequent work would be imbued with an underlying postcolonial aesthetics rooted in the understanding of a history

of black exploitation about which Martinican author Frantz Fanon would write so eloquently in *Les Damnés de la Terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961), played against the background of a tropical ecology whose amazing biodiversity had been threatened by the same colonial forces against which his art would speak to the end of his career.

In *Fluid Ecologies*, Lam serves as an anchor figure—as the starting point of an aesthetic genealogy that provides a point of reference for artists whose work continues to delve into the consequences of colonization and empire, racial and ethnic struggles and, increasingly, the dangers posed by global warming and climate change. We can see Lam's legacy in Rafael Ferrer's *Cuando Despierte* (*When It Awakens*) of 1976, a remarkable watercolor painted over a United States Air Force Operational Navigation Chart showing the coast of Brazil and part of its Amazonian region around the São Francisco River. On the checkerboard grid that Ferrer has superimposed on this tool of surveillance (in the political climate of 1976, a tool of *imperial* surveillance), letters form various words, “*arre*,” “Amazonica,” and “no.” “*Arre*”—Spanish for “Move!,” “Get up,” or “Enough!”—carries its share of ambiguity. Not so “Amazonica” and “No,” with their clear “hands off” message.

Ferrer (Puerto Rico, b. 1933) was trained in Paris, where he worked under the guidance of Spanish Surrealist Eugenio Granell and met Wifredo Lam. An early solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1971 brought him to prominence in the United States art world precisely at a time when he began consciously to work on shedding the “cool” American conceptualist label he had attained in the late 1960s to embrace an *engagé* aesthetic and proclaim his dissatisfaction with the state of art as a product made by and for an elite. True to Lam's mentorship, his work in



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the 1970s, as evidenced by *When It Awakens*, moved to the political, social, and economic plight of his native Puerto Rico, the wider Caribbean, and Latin America under U.S. domination. What surprises foremost about *When It Awakens* is the early embrace of a postcolonial environmentalist perspective at a time when Amazonia had become a target for deforestation in order to open the region for logging, cattle grazing, and agriculture under U.S. corporations operating in Latin America. Capturing a moment of crucial environmental decision for the region, Ferrer's use of the surveillance map forces a look from above, a blend of surveillance and mastery that lays bare his condemnation of both the U.S. neocolonial presence and the powerlessness of those without access to the technologies of dominance. It is an environmental depiction that contrasts sharply with the serene natural scene of Vassar's *Untitled* (1984), an example of the artist's "tropical sublime" project. *Untitled* was Ferrer's contribution to *The Atelier Project*, a collection of sixteen prints by distinguished American artists commissioned by the Division of Visual Arts of the State University of New York at Purchase and meant primarily as a teaching tool.



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These same concerns about technologies of dominance and control that we find in Ferrer's *When It Awakens* are central to the work of José Bedia (Cuba, b. 1959), another painter heavily influenced by Lam, who thought Bedia could lead a new generation of African-derived Cuban artists. The works in Vassar's collection, *Dominio de La Situación* (*Control of the Situation*) and *Barco Madre* (*Mother Ship*)—both from 1994—address the *balsero* crisis of that year through the deployment of aesthetic principles drawn from Lam's artistic heritage: the power of nature (the Caribbean Sea), U.S. hegemony in the Caribbean region, and the significance of Afro-Cuban practices like *Santería* and *Palo Monte*¹¹ as forces that protect Afro-Caribbean descendants from both the dangers of nature and technologies of surveillance. The *balsero* (rafters) crisis emerged as Cuba faced the *Special Period in Time of Peace* it had declared after the collapse of the Soviet Union left the Cuban economy in shambles. An announcement by Fidel Castro in August 1994 that any Cuban wishing to leave the island was free to do so propelled tens of thousands onto the sea to attempt the ninety-mile crossing to Florida in makeshift rafts. The U.S. Coast Guard detained nearly 31,000 rafters in the Florida Straits and held them in Guantánamo, the largest number since the Mariel Boatlift of 1980. In response to the crisis, the Clinton administration instituted the "wet foot/dry foot" policy that granted refugee status to any Cuban reaching American soil but returned those detained at sea to Cuba.

The *balsero* crisis is prominent in Bedia's paintings and installations made between 1994 and 1997,¹² as it is in *Control of the Situation* and *Mother Ship*. In addressing the *balsero* crisis, Bedia turns to the figure of Kalunga, the Palo Monte/Congo goddess of the sea: "Kalunga, the goddess of the sea," he has explained, "is someone you must get on your side to make the journey. . . . Her name is Kawanga



Checklist no. 2

[in the Congo tradition] or Bawande [also spelled Baluandé] . . . or in the Yoruba tradition [she is] Yemayá.¹³ Kalunga's power is expressed through her control over the seas; no safe journey across the Florida Straits to a new life in the United States can be accomplished without her blessing. In *Mother Ship* she appears as emerging from the waters, her head a sturdy rescue ship ready to succor the many drowning *balseros* whose heads are seen bobbing over the surface of the waters framing the image, offering anchors to those in peril. In one of her many avatars as nurturing mother, here Kalunga literally transforms into the rescue ship, in a depiction that links Bedia's work during this period to that of many Haitian painters, chief among them Edouard Duval-Carrié, who depicted the African-derived deities of Santería and Vodou as accompanying refugees in their perilous crossings to Florida, where they faced both the dangers of the sea and the constant surveillance of a vigilant U.S. Coast Guard.¹⁴

In Palo Monte, Kalunga is also the horizon line that separates the world of the living from that of the dead, an avatar of the goddess of great significance in Central African and Afro-Cuban beliefs, where she represents the watery boundary between the two. In *Control of the Situation*, Kalunga firmly holds that liminal line, keeping it in perfect balance. Aiding the transformation of the horizon line into a threshold between two (migrant) realms, the *firmas* or cosmograms painted on Kalunga's hands and shoulders both affirm faith and invoke cosmic assistance and power. The creation of *firmas* or signatures, as Bedia does in *Control of the Situation*, is both "an act of faith and an aesthetic act."¹⁵ Bedia's *firmas* evoke *ashé* or divine power and the natural elements faced by *balseros* while at sea, reminding us that, in Santería and Palo Monte, safe sea crossings depend on the understanding of the necessary balance between cosmic forces and the natural world.

Bedia's work finds its source in an Afro-Cuban spiritual genealogy he shared with Wifredo Lam. Fellow Cuban artist Tomás Sánchez (Cuba, b. 1948), in turn, shares with Lam a spiritual focus on "the forest as a site of holiness, a place of energy and power."¹⁶ Frequently compared to Caspar

David Friedrich (Germany, 1774–1840) and the painters of the Hudson River School (particularly Frederic Church, 1826–1900) for his idealized landscapes that conjure images of a lost paradise, Sánchez fluctuates between painstakingly (re)created pristine and luminescent landscapes he imbues with deep spiritual significance, as we can see in Vassar’s *Caída de Aguas* (*Waterfall*, 2003) and his equally realistic but significantly more disturbing images of steaming garbage dumps and seashores covered in metal and plastic flotsam. Once considered a “virtuoso of hyperrealism,” he has turned its techniques to laying bare “his profound longing for vanished landscapes, the virgin forests, the natural state before the arrival of the Spaniards, the destructive action of mankind on nature and the preservation of the environment as the motif of choice for his creations.”¹⁷ *Waterfall* belongs among Sánchez’s vanished landscapes, a primeval forest where a cascade reminds us of the cyclic nature of time and nature stands as a refuge that reminds us of what human environmental depredations have destroyed.

Ponce Inter-Continental Hotel, Ponce, Puerto Rico, a screenprint with acrylic and watercolors by Enoc Perez (Puerto Rico, b. 1967)—a haunting depiction of an abandoned hotel as an architectural revenant—may at first glance appear to epitomize the exact inverse of Sánchez’s primeval



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Waterfall. The two works, nonetheless, share a common environmental purpose. The work was created for Exit Art's last art portfolio, focused on Puerto Rico's El Yunque rainforest and produced shortly before the closing of the influential alternative art venue. The portfolio was the last iteration of Exit Art's Social Environmental Aesthetics project, which sought to bring attention to El Yunque's fragile ecosystem, a space where Exit Art is trying to establish an artists' retreat. *Ponce Inter-Continental Hotel, Ponce, Puerto Rico* is characteristic of Perez's recent work, which has focused on iconic architectural monuments—in this case an abandoned landmark hotel designed by William B. Tabler and built in 1960 at El Vigía, high above the coastal southern city and providing panoramic views of the Caribbean Sea. Perez's project, which has included painted silkscreens of buildings he sees as "metaphors," such as the Seagram Building, the United Nations headquarters, Eero Saarinen's TWA terminal, and Lever House, offers a critique of the world of commerce, exclusivity and power, pleasure and consumption. *Inter-Continental Hotel, Ponce, Puerto Rico* belongs to a series on *Modern Era Caribbean Hotels* and addresses the hotel as architectural waste, as the debris left behind by failing tourism infrastructure that remains as sites of colonialism's corrosive legacy. Perez's ghostly architectural paintings have been moving consistently towards abstraction since their first iteration more than a decade ago. In his most recent paintings, buildings have become increasingly spectral and distressed, an allusion to the deterioration of both the buildings and their cultural significance. Covered in bright monochromatic washes, they retain only the vibrancy of a color not naturally their own. Fading into blots of vivid color, Perez's work recalls the vibrant blotches of pigment in Luis Fernando Roldán's untitled watercolors in the Vassar collection—a personal tribute to Mark Rothko in which Roldán nonetheless consciously avoids Rothko's characteristic forms, freeing their shapes through the fluidity of water as an artistic medium.

In 1968, shortly after the Venezuelan American artist Marisol (Marisol Escobar, b. 1930) had seen her sculptural portrait *Hugh Hefner* featured on the cover of *Time* magazine, she embarked on an extended period of travel that took her to Tahiti, Latin America, and the Caribbean, motivated by the need to move far away from what she perceived to be a world in crisis. She returned to New York five years later to produce a remarkable series of large-scale drawings in colored pencil, crayon, and pastels, some, like Vassar's *Untitled*, on black paper. Focusing on multiplicities of sensuously-moving hands drawn with great finesse and an exhilarating profusion of vivid colors and flowing forms, they capture a free and sensual joy that bursts off the page, transforming hands into feathers, feathers into birds' eyes, fusing the human and the natural world as seamless continuities. They also capture the apprehension, fear, and dark foreboding lurking behind the chasms of the black paper.

Marisol's fluid and transformative lines—at once joyous and apprehensive, human and animal—speak to the realities addressed by the Hispanic Caribbean artists featured in this exhibition. They have sought to capture in their work a disavowal of the tropical Caribbean as a tourist's paradise, replacing that most ubiquitous of *Caribbean* landscapes with vivid renderings born of an art created from the crossroads of the world, emerging from the Caribbean region's fluid ecologies.

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Checklist no. 8



NOTES

- 1 Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Translated by J. Michael Dash. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989, 230.
- 2 David Mikics, "Derek Walcott and Alejo Carpentier: Nature, History, and the Caribbean Writer." In *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995, 371, 372.
- 3 *Regla de Ocha*, commonly known as *Santería*, is a complex system of African-derived religious beliefs that "syncretizes, articulates, and reproduces extensive orders of knowledge in the areas of psychotherapy, pharmacology, art, music, magic, and narrative" (Matibag, 7). Its worshipers are called *santeros* as they venerate the Yoruba deities called *orishas* or *santos*, syncretized with Catholic saints. See Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert's *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*. New York: NYU Press, 2011. See also Eugenio Matibag's "Ifá and Interpretation: An Afro-Caribbean Literary Practice." In *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santería, Obeah and the Caribbean*. Edited by Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997.
- 4 Max-Pol Fouchet, *Wifredo Lam*. New York: Rizzoli, 1978, 23.
- 5 Robin Adèle Greeley, "Art and Politics in Contemporary Latin America." *Oxford Art Journal* 32:1 (2009): 163.
- 6 Greeley, 166.
- 7 André Breton, *Fata Morgana*. Illustrated by Wifredo Lam. Buenos Aires: Éditions des Lettres Françaises, Sur, 1942.
- 8 Jorge Núñez Vega, "Downloading Africa: *Fata Morgana* in Wilfredo [sic] Lam's Work." *Islas* 2:8 (2007): 74.
- 9 Krzysztof Fijalkowski, Review of *Lettres à Aube 1938-1966* by André Breton. *Papers of Surrealism* 9 (2011).
- 10 Pierre Loeb, Lam's Paris agent, quoted in "Chronology 1938-1941" in *Wifredo Lam* (<http://www.wifredolam.net/en/chronology/1941-1945.html>).
- 11 *Palo Monte* is a general rubric used for religions of Congo origin in Cuba, which includes *Regla Biyumba*, *Regla Musunde*, *Regla Quirimaya*, *Regla Vrillumba*, and the *Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje* ("of the Holy Christ of the Good Journey"). Considered the most syncretized of Afro-Cuban practices, Congo religions in Cuba derive elements from Yoruba and other African practices and Roman Catholicism. See Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert's *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*.
- 12 See Judith Bettelheim and Janet Catherine Berlo, *Transcultural Pilgrim: Three Decades of Work by José Bedia*. Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2011, 189.
- 13 Bettelheim and Berlo, 187.
- 14 See Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert and Martha Daisy Kellehan's "Haiti's Botpippel: Representations of 'Boat People' in Caribbean Art and Literature." In *Displacements and Transformations in Caribbean Literature and Culture*. Edited by Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert and Ivette Romero Cesareo. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009.
- 15 Judith Bettelheim, "Caribbean Espiritismo (Spiritist) Altars: The Indian and the Congo." *The Art Bulletin* 87:2 (2005): 321.
- 16 *A Vision of Grandeur: Masterworks from the Collection of Lorenzo H. Zambrano*, Sotheby's, New York, 24 November 2014, lot 8 (catalogue note by Edward J. Sullivan).
- 17 Hortensia Montero, "Tomás Sánchez: Going Beyond Time." *Arte por Excelencias* 4 (2010). <http://www.revistasexcelencias.com/en/arte-por-excelencias/editorial-4/reportaje/tomas-sanchez-going-beyond-time>

CHECKLIST

1 José Bedia (Cuban, b. 1959)

Barco Madre (Mother Ship), 1994

Acrylic, conte on paper

33 ¾ x 49 ¾ in. (90.81 x 126.37 cm)

Purchase, Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings

1994.28.2

2 José Bedia (Cuban, b. 1959)

Dominio de La Situación (Control of the Situation), 1994

Ink on amate paper

47 ¼ x 95 in. (120.02 x 241.3 cm)

Purchase, Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings

1994.28.1

3 Rafael Ferrer (Puerto Rican, b. 1933)

Cuando despierte (When It Awakens), 1975

Oil crayon and watercolor on paper

44 1/4 x 60 in. (112.4 x 152.4 cm)

Purchase, Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings

1976.77

4 Rafael Ferrer (Puerto Rican, b. 1933)

Untitled (The Atelier Project 1983-1986), 1984

Carborundum print on Somerset paper

Image: 15 9/16 x 11 1/2 in. (39.53 x 29.21 cm)

Sheet: 29 7/8 x 22 3/8 in. (75.88 x 56.83 cm)

Gift of Philip and Lynn Straus, class of 1946

1991.22.4

5 Wifredo Lam (Cuban, 1902–1982)

Untitled (from the Fata Morgana series), 1941

Pencil and pen on paper

8 5/8 x 6 5/8 in. (21.91 x 16.83 cm)

Purchase, Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings

1976.75

6 Marisol (American, b. France, 1930)

Untitled, 1976

Colored pencil and pastels on black paper

39 x 27 1/2 in. (99.06 x 69.85 cm)

Purchase, Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings

1977.8

7 Enoc Perez (Puerto Rican, b. 1967)

Ponce Inter-Continental Hotel, Ponce, Puerto Rico, from *Exit Art portfolio, 2011: SEA*

(*Social-Environmental Aesthetics*), 2011

Screenprint with acrylic and watercolor on Coventry Rag White 320gsm, unique hand edition

30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.88 cm)

Gift from Exit Art

2012.26.3.4

8 Luis Fernando Roldán (Colombian, b. 1955)

Untitled, 1993

Five watercolors on paper mounted on canvas

14 5/8 x 11 7/8 in. (37.15 x 30.16 cm), each

Purchase, Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings

1993.6.1-.5

9 Tomás Sánchez (Cuban, b. 1948)

Caída de Aguas (Waterfall), 2003

Charcoal and pastel on paper

25 1/2 x 19 3/4 in. (64.77 x 50.17 cm)

Purchase, Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings

2003.25

All works are from the collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Most of the works included in this exhibition were acquired for the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center's permanent collection through the Barbara Doyle Duncan, class of 1943, Fund for Contemporary Latin American Drawings. Mrs. Duncan, a noted collector, curator, and scholar, is credited with introducing Latin American art to galleries and museums in the United States through numerous exhibitions organized between the 1960s and her death in 2003. Her generous gifts to Vassar for the acquisition of Latin American drawings attest to her lifelong commitment to an art marked, in her own words, by its "reluctance to give up the subject of the human condition."

Rafael Ferrer's *Untitled* was a gift from Philip and Lynn Straus, class of 1946, whose Foundation has supported a broad range of artistic, educational, and civil rights projects, many of them in the Caribbean. Enoc Perez's *Ponce Inter-Continental Hotel, Ponce, Puerto Rico* was a gift from Exit Art, the path-breaking gallery founded by Puerto Rican artist Papo Colo and curator Jeanette Ingberman, whose exhibitions have been noted for their consistent inclusion of Latino and Latin American art.

I am deeply grateful to Elizabeth Nogrady, Coordinator of Academic Programs for the Art Center, and to Margaret Vetare, Coordinator of Public Education and Information, for their encouragement and constant support in the organization of this exhibition. Thanks are also due to George Laws and Daniel Lasecki of Vassar's Office of Communications. The Hispanic Studies Department's Antonio Márquez Fund kindly sponsored a visit by art historian Judith Bettelheim to speak to the Vassar community about the José Bedia works in the Vassar collection; I thank my departmental colleagues for their support. The Environmental Studies Program contributed to the publication of this brochure, and I thank the participating faculty for their generosity. My thanks go also to the Creative Arts Across Disciplines initiative for their support. Judith Bettelheim, Ivette Romero-Cesareo, and Carolyn Poulton Miles (Vassar class of 1963) have my heartfelt thanks for all the conversations about the artists featured in the exhibition, as does Nicholas Sorensen for his help in researching artists and works and for his thoughtful evaluation of both.

This brochure was published in association with *Fluid Ecologies: Hispanic Caribbean Art from the Permanent Collection*, an exhibition at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, from January 26 to May 8, 2016.

For further information on this exhibition, go to <http://fluidecologies.net/>

This brochure was designed by the Publications division of the Vassar College Office of Communications.

Support for the printing of this brochure was generously provided by Vassar's Environmental Studies Program and by the Creative Arts Across Disciplines initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center is located on the campus of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York.

The Art Center is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 10am – 5pm; Thursday 10am – 9pm; and Sunday 1 – 5pm. Admission is free and open to the public. All galleries are wheelchair accessible.

The Art Center is closed on Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Easter, and from December 24 through January 15.

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