

Latin American Art

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**FRIDA
KAHLO**

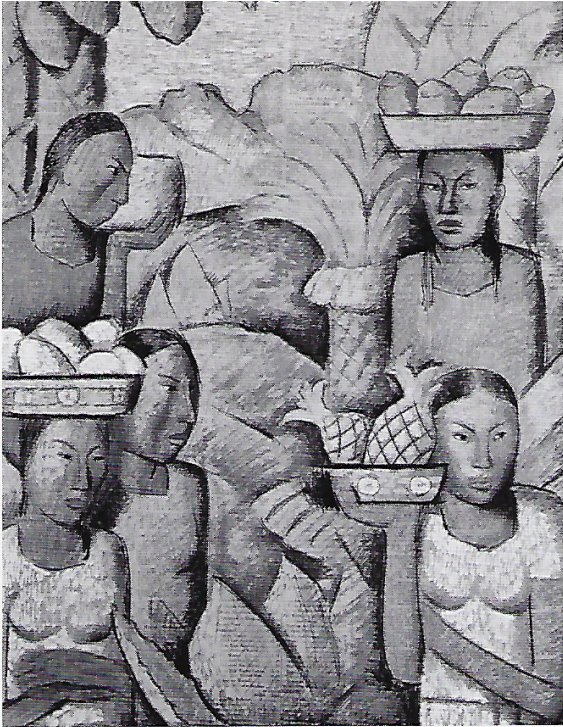
**INTERVIEW:
ENRIQUE
GRAU**

**OSWALDO
GUAYASAMIN**

**EDDIE
DOMINGUEZ**

**JUAN
SANCHEZ**

**GUILLERMO
KUITCA**



Alfredo Ramos Martinez, *Vendedora de Frutas*, tempera on newsprint, 21 x 16 inches.

ALFREDO RAMOS MARTINEZ

Louis Stern Galleries

A surprising revelation of the "Artes de Mexico" and "Mexico: A Work of Art" festivals, this retrospective exhibition of the works of Alfredo Ramos Martinez, a seminal figure of the School of Mexican Painting, founder of the Open Air Painting Schools, and an influential artist of the Southern California School of the 1930s, has initiated new interest in this long-overlooked artist. As a result of this show, a major retrospective of Ramos Martinez is being planned and will be held in 1992 at the Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City from where it will travel to the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo in Monterrey.

A radical departure from the decorative art-deco portraits associated with Ramos' career in Mexico, these 31 works were executed in California after 1930, the year that Ramos Martinez arrived there. Drawing on a memory of image and space, Ramos conceived a strongly stylized visual language affirming a stylistic and thematic unity with the Mexican school.

In three works, two large oil on canvas and a tempera on newsprint, *La Malinche*, *La India de Tehuantepec*, and *Madre y Niño*, two strong influences, the monumentality of Olmec sculpture and the strong graphic line of Mexican graphics of the 1930s, are fully evident. In other works, notably the group compositions in *La Pintora de Uruapan*, *Vendedoras de Flores*, and *Homenaje a*

Quetzalcoatl, the figures reveal a strong understanding of the rectilinear of the Italian Quattrocento, an influence shared by Diego Rivera particularly in his early frescos. Like Rivera, Ramos Martinez lived in Paris and traveled in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But the space and volume of these neo-primitive and highly stylized works are also strongly influenced by the California sculptors of the 1930s, notably Gordon Newell.

Ramos' brilliant palette demonstrates a control concomitant with Mexican painting, revealing a masterful equilibrium between colors and tonality. His flower still lifes, for example, experiment with hues of yellow against yellow or blues and greens.

This show firmly establishes Ramos Martinez as one of the early masters of the Mexican School and an artist who will be drawing more attention from scholars and collectors.

—Juliana Murphy Campbell

FOUR DECADES AFTER THE MURALISTS

Kimberly Gallery

This exhibition, which inaugurated the Kimberly Gallery in Los Angeles, focuses on the aesthetic behind "La Ruptura" and emphasizes the painterly tradition which persisted, and in some cases subsisted, because of the spirit and shadow of Rufino Tamayo, despite the great popularity and dominance of the Muralist painters. The show also includes photography by Manuel Alvarez Bravo, the oldest master represented, and sculpture by Feliciano Bejar and Antonio Castellanos.

In an essay for the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, Antonio Espina uses the title of a painting by Cordelia Urueta, "The Eye of Time," to identify three generations of artists who represent the "other" side of Mexican art.

Among the works of the first generation is a masterful still life by Olga Costa, *La Calabaza*, as well as some poetic landscapes and still lifes by Gustavo Montoya, Joy Laville, José Chávez Morado, Luis Nishizawa and Roger Von Gunten. Bejar's whimsical "Magiscopes," his signature discs of crystal mounted in metal, are included as well.

The second generation includes two powerful canvases from the "Homage to Van Gogh" series by Gilberto Aceves Navarro, Vicente Rojo's brooding and mystical abstractions, and drawings by José Luis Cuevas. Rodolfo Morales makes references to the popular and figurative tradition in two works, *El caballito*, and *La casa amarilla*.

The show concludes with the works of four young artists, Miguel Castro Leñero, Raymundo Sesma, Roberto Parodi and Sergio Hernández. Their diverse approaches to painting speak to the continuity of vitality and divergence in Mexican painting.

—M.N.

ROBERT GIL DE MONTES

Jan Baum Gallery

Two simultaneous exhibitions, one, a retrospective at the Los Angeles Junior Arts Center Gallery entitled, "Ni Aquí Ni Allá" and an exhibition of new work at the Jan Baum Gallery, chronicle Robert Gil de Montes' personal absorption with the spatial realities of making art. Gil de Montes is likely the Los Angeles painter who best exemplifies the dichotomies and conflicts of biculturalism. His career as a painter and art maker spans Guadalajara, Los Angeles, and Mexico City. His past work has explored the aesthetics of the act of painting, while his current work is more involved with painterly aspects. Media, color, surface, and space become the principals for his consistently personal statements which continue to explore the anguish of time and the memory of the loss of artists and friends through disease (AIDS). In a visual language that has



Jaguar y Perro, 1991, oil on canvas, 90 x 62 inches.