

# BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

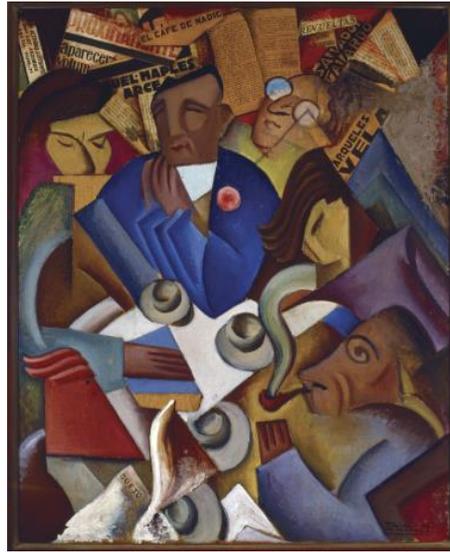
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**Blanton Museum of Art Presents *The Avant-garde Network of Amauta:  
Argentina, Mexico, and Peru in the 1920s***



*New Research on Avant-Garde Magazine Amauta Illuminates Latin American History, Culture, and Politics of the 1920s*

AUSTIN, TX—December 13, 2019—The Blanton Museum of Art will present *The Avant-garde Networks of Amauta: Argentina, Mexico, and Peru in the 1920s* from February 16 to May 17, 2020. Co-organized by the Blanton Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte de Lima, the exhibition traveled to the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, the Museo de Arte de Lima in Peru, and the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City before its concluding presentation at the Blanton.

“The Blanton is honored to present *The Avant-garde Networks of Amauta: Argentina, Mexico, and Peru in the 1920s* as it concludes its international tour,” said Blanton director Simone Wicha. “This groundbreaking exhibition, co-organized by the Blanton and the Museo de Arte de Lima, significantly shifts our understanding of Latin American art history in the 1920s. *The Avant-garde Networks of Amauta* is the first exhibition to examine this crucial period of artistic production and political engagement, with a special focus on Peru as a nexus of avant-garde activity. We are excited to offer this new perspective on this period and to present these rare materials from Latin America, many of which will be on view in the US for the first time.”

The 1920s were a period of rapid modernization and artistic innovation across the globe. As avant-garde movements emerged, their leaders published magazines, which launched manifestos, circulated new ideas, and exhibited works of art to wider audiences. It is within this global context of avant-garde experimentation, including movements such as Mexican muralism, Italian Futurism, and international Surrealism, that the journal *Amauta* was founded in Peru in 1926. Using *Amauta* as a lens through which to study this period of extraordinary transformation, *The Avant-garde Networks of Amauta* captures a uniquely intertwined dialogue around avant-garde art and leftist politics, proposing a new narrative for Latin American modernism in the process.

*The Avant-garde Networks of Amauta* considers the magazine both as a political and artistic project and as an historical object. It features issues of the magazine, art reproduced in the journal, and works by prominent artists and writers who were significant contributors to *Amauta*. The sections of the exhibition explore major themes in *Amauta* including avant-garde networks in Latin America and Europe, the innovative potential artists found in traditional arts and crafts, the links between leftist politics and art making, and the emergence of Indigenism. The exhibition includes more than 300 objects in an expansive range of media and styles including painting, sculpture, poetry, traditional crafts, publications, and ephemera. When possible, the curators have displayed works featured in the magazine alongside their original publications.

Created and directed by the intellectual and activist José Carlos Mariátegui, *Amauta* was published in Lima between 1926 and 1930. During its four years of publication, it reached more than sixty cities in Peru as well as another eighty cities internationally. Connecting a vast network of contributors, *Amauta* published or reviewed work by Jorge Luis Borges, Norah Borges, André Breton, Georg Grosz, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, Sigmund Freud, Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda, Emilio Pettoruti, Diego Rivera, and José Sabogal alongside many others.

“With its immense network of contributors at the forefront of artistic and political thinking in their countries, *Amauta* offers an unparalleled lens through which to view Latin American modernism,” said co-curator of the exhibition Beverly Adams, previous Blanton curator of Latin American art and now the Estrellita Brodsky Curator of Latin American Art at the Museum of Modern Art, who curated the exhibition with Natalia Majluf, previous director of the Museo de Arte de Lima. “As curators, we were especially excited to resituate Peru at the center of discussions about avant-garde art in the period. At the same time, while the exhibition traces local histories that had been understudied in Peru, Argentina, and Mexico, *Amauta* marks one of the first moments in which an idea of Latin America as a region with strong cultural ties and shared political projects began to take shape.”



### The Birth of Amauta

"The Birth of Amauta," chronicles the origins of the magazine, which date in part to Mariátegui's travels to Europe between 1919 and 1923. It includes works by artists and materials from movements that Mariátegui admired or was in contact with, such as Emilio Pettoruti, Georg Grosz, and Alexander Archipenko, several of whom would have work published in *Amauta*. Mariátegui's European journey influenced his desire to establish a magazine that would place international artistic movements in dialogue with local aesthetic developments and political contexts. This section includes early designs for a precursor to *Amauta*, a selection of Mariátegui's correspondence on loan from The Mariátegui Archive, and materials relating to the founding of the magazine, including its first issue.



### The Formation of Avant-garde Networks

*Amauta's* collaborators were involved in networks of exchange via magazines, written correspondence, international travel, and contact with individuals living in political exile in other countries, spanning Latin America and reaching Europe. The exhibition illustrates some of those key networks and movements, such as a contemporaneous avant-garde group in Mexico called Estridentismo, which was itself in dialogue with Italian Futurism. Also included are examples of other influential journals from the period in Latin American and beyond, including *Proa*, *Martín Fierro*, *Motocicleta*, and *Timonel*. In addition,

featured in this section are masterworks by Mexican artists Diego Rivera and Ramón Alva de la Canal, Peruvian artist Juan Devéscovi, and Argentine artists Emilio Pettorutti, Xul Solar, and Norah Borges.



### **Traditional Crafts as Innovation**

At the same time, artists began to re-examine traditional media, reconceptualizing handmade crafts such as weaving, ceramics, wood carving, and woodcut prints as avant-garde artforms. Artists that embraced local popular traditions radically questioned the idea of “fine art” as defined by European and Latin American academic standards at the time. The exhibition includes early examples of research, exhibitions catalogues, and publications related to popular art from Mexico by Dr. Atl and Roberto Montenegro. Also included are issues of *Amauta* that featured an essay on José Sabogal’s research on hand-carved mate gourds from the Central Peruvian highlands, which influenced the graphic design of the publication. Other examples include silk tapestries by Lola Cueto; an impressive pair of red cedar doors created under the direction of Gabriel Fernández Ledesma; woodcut prints by José Sabogal, Isabel Villaseñor, and Francisco Díaz de León; and engraved gourds by Mariano Inés Flores.

Many artists and intellectuals featured in *Amauta* rejected modes of academic teaching imported from Europe in favor of socially integrated schools for popular art that celebrated national traditions. These discussions often appeared in the pages of *Amauta*; the exhibition includes works and instruction manuals by educators and artists Adolfo Best Maugard in Mexico, and Elena Izcue in Peru.



### **The Image of Politics**

Mariátegui conceived of *Amauta* as a political platform for the advancement of socialism, alongside his work in union organizing, direction of the leftist newspaper *Labor*, and founding role in the Peruvian Socialist Party. The exhibition delves into *Amauta*’s political program, especially Mariátegui’s pluralistic editorial approach that united diverse artistic styles under a leftist umbrella. It includes examples of socialist periodicals from Latin America, as well as artworks in a variety of media extolling workers,

organizers, and activists. The exhibition underscores close ties of thinkers and artists in *Amauta's* orbit with other movements and individual artists involved in leftist politics. These include members of the Argentine group "The Artists of the People," and works by Mexican Muralists David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and José Clemente Orozco alongside Rufino Tamayo, Tina Modotti, Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, and Rosendo Salazar.



### **Indigenism as Avant-garde**

Indigenism was a cultural and political movement that emerged in some Latin American countries in the 1920s, which brought heightened attention to discourse about indigenous groups. *Amauta's* editorial program and graphic identity were both associated with Indigenism. Articles supporting indigenous rights, land reform, and the incorporation of indigenous peoples into new ideals of national culture appeared alongside indigenous-influenced motifs, typography, and stylized depictions of contemporary indigenous figures. As a wider movement in the visual arts, artists associated with Indigenism portrayed contemporary indigenous subjects in a dignified way across media. The exhibition includes paintings, prints, drawings, and photographs of idealized indigenous subjects by José Sabogal, Julia Codesido, Diego Rivera, Carlos Mérida, and Martín Chambi.

### **Catalogue**

*The Avant-Garde Networks of Amauta* is accompanied by a catalogue, edited by co-curators Beverly Adams (formerly Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin) and Natalia Majluf (Museo de Arte de Lima, Peru), published in Spanish and English versions. It features an introduction co-written by Majluf and Adams, and several essays addressing subjects that had received limited attention in scholarship about the period, including the following: Mariátegui's interest in avant-garde art; *Amauta's* links with other important magazines of the period; Indigenism as avant-garde movement; José Sabogal's exhibition in Buenos Aires in 1928; printmaking and political activism; and the legacy Mariátegui's vision on the Latin American left. The book features an illustrated section organized by country that documents the key publications and press correspondents comprising *Amauta's* networks

in Peru and abroad. Authors include Fernanda Beigel, Patricia Artundo, Lynda Klich, Ricardo Kusunoki, Natalia de la Rosa, Roberto Amigo, Silvia Dolinko, Horacio Tarcus, Pablo Cruz, and Ana Torres.

*The Avant-garde Networks of Amauta: Argentina, Mexico, and Peru in the 1920s* is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte de Lima.

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### **Latin America at the Blanton:**

The Blanton holds one of the oldest, largest, and most comprehensive collections of Latin American art in the country, a continued collecting focus for the museum dating back to 1963. In 1988, Blanton was the first museum in the US to establish a curatorial position devoted to Latin American art. The collection currently comprises approximately 2,800 works of modern and contemporary paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures alongside a growing collection of Art from the Spanish Americas.

### **About the Blanton:**

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with around 19,000 objects. Recognized as the home of Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*, its major collecting areas are modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

### **Image Captions:**

Ramón Alva de la Cana, *El Café de Nadie* [*Nobody's Café*], circa 1930, oil and collage on canvas, 78 x 64 cm (30 11/16 x 25 3/16 in.), INBA / Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico Image: © D.R. Museo Nacional de Arte / Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, 2017 Courtesy of Jorge Ramón Alva Hernández

Xul Solar, *Proa* [*Bow*], 1925, watercolor and graphite on graph paper 30.2 x 22.2 cm (11 7/8 x 8 3/4 in.), Fundación Pan Klub, Museo Xul Solar, Buenos Aires © DR Fundación Pan Klub –Museo Xul Solar

Lola Velásquez de Cueto, *Bandera mexicana* [*Mexican Flag*] 1920s, silk tapestry made with chain stitch 42 x 150 cm (16 9/16 x 59 1/16 in.) Private Collection, Lima © Sucesión Mireya Cueto, Photo courtesy of Lance Aaron

Rufino Tamayo, *Obreros en el camino* [*Road Workers*], 1932, gouache on paper, 26.4 cm x 20.2 cm (10 3/8 in. x 7 15/16 in.) Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Judy S. and Charles W. Tate, 2014© 2018 Tamayo Heirs / Mexico / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

José Sabogal, *Varayoaq de Chinchero* [Mayor of Chinchero], 1925, oil on canvas, 169 x 109 cm (66 9/16 x 42 15/16 in.), Pinacoteca Municipal Ignacio Merino, Lima

