

## Face to Face

February-April 2015

Cecilia de Torres presents the exhibition *Face to Face*, a selection of paintings, wood assemblages and works on paper by gallery artists focused on the human physiognomy. Whether imagined or inspired by a real person, the human face lends itself to countless interpretations. In portraying the face, modern artists struggled with the tension between abstraction and naturalistic representation, deformation and resemblance. This exhibition, which features works created over almost the entire length of the twentieth century (dating from 1920 to 1993), demonstrate various artists' responses to the face with representations that range from the playful to the psychological, from the structured to the fantastic.

An entire wall of the gallery is dedicated to portraits created by **Joaquín Torres-García** (1874-1949). In *Manola y Charro* (1930), the artist pokes fun at representations of Spaniards, depicting his couple in traditional costumes that evoke *zarzuela* or *flamenco* performances. Three portraits from 1939 depict an imaginary personality wearing a 19th century collar; an "everyman" of Montevideo suited with a hat and pipe; and *The Gangster* whose dangerous character is suggested by his snide smile and squinting eyes. Although these figurative works are less well known than Torres-Garcia's more familiar constructivist *oeuvre*, all were created using the Golden Section, their proportions manipulated to reveal the essential and personal characters.

Works by artists who studied with Torres-Garcia at the artist's famous "School of the South" are featured across the gallery. In two works by **Gonzalo Fonseca** (1922-1997) and **José Gurvich** (1927-1974), the outline of two heads are divided by a grid embedded with a constellation of symbols. *Mujer Leyendo* (1959) by **Julio Alpuy** (1919-2009) depicts a woman reading in a rainbow-hued interior, and is exhibited in the gallery alongside the artist's ink and wash study.

A series of small female heads by fellow Taller Torres-Garcia artist **Francisco Matto**, (1911-1995) reveals the school's common interest in

ancient civilizations. These haunting faces with intriguing eyes were painted near the end of Matto's life, and were inspired by the Roman-Egyptian Fayum paintings for mummy-portraits from the 1st century.

Self-portraits by Alpuy, Torres-Garcia, and the Venezuelan artist and graphic designer **Gerd Leufert** (1914-1998) provide visual testament of these artist's introspective concepts of the self at various stages in their careers. Notable are the two works by Torres-Garcia. In his 1920 self-portrait created in New York, the artist portrays himself with intense eyes and disheveled hair, asserting his place as an active member of the city's avant-garde art scene. Some ten years later, Torres-Garcia created another self-portrait in his recently developed constructive style. In this work, a gridded structure is filled with autobiographical data such as his date of birth (July 1874) and symbols and words that reference his personal preferences: warmth, harmony, idea, and painting.

Other artworks in the show include watercolors by **Cesar Paternosto** (1931-lives in Spain) that reflect his engagement with Surrealism as a young artist in Buenos Aires; a painted and wood assemblage by **Manuel Pailós** (1918-2004) engages with volumetric space; and a painting of a crowd of faces by **José Gurvich**. Painted in warm golden tones, this last work depicts a group of young Israelis wearing the *kova temble*, a national symbol in Israel. Gurvich lived in Israel on the Ramot Menasche kibbutz, and this painting reflects his strong attachment to this ideal of collective, rural life.