

Rufino Tamayo

Múltiples visiones

Coloquio Internacional

27, 28 y 29

de agosto 2024

Unidad de Extensión Universitaria UNAM, Oaxaca

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Unidad Oaxaca

Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca

Call for papers



RUFINO TAMAYO

Rufino Tamayo (Oaxaca de Juárez, 1899 - Mexico City, 1991) is one of the most representative figures of Twentieth-Century Mexican art. With a long artistic career, his painting stands out for opening an intersection between tradition and modernity, by synthesizing both local and cosmopolitan references. Tamayo's artistic program was nourished by Non-Western Art –from ancient references to folk art. Tamayo was a substantial figure in the rearrangement of cultural policy unleashed by the geopolitical changes of the postwar era. In this context, his painting was a reference for young artists in the search for new aesthetic horizons.

Recently, Tamayo's legacy has been revisited from different perspectives, which highlighted the relationship with disciplines such as music, archaeology and anthropology, or the transnational condition of this figure and his aesthetic proposal. These approaches reveal unexpected debates about the theory and practice of this artist and that, in retrospect, allow us to delve into different points and interweave other narratives about the author.

In the context of the 125th anniversary of the Oaxacan painter Rufino Tamayo, the CelebrArte Tamayo O_125 project, coordinated by Alejandra Flores Tamayo, and the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas-Unidad Oaxaca organize the conference Rufino Tamayo. Múltiples Visiones. This conference will address different aspects of Rufino Tamayo's production and activities, also taking up his connections with Oaxaca.

We have considered for this colloquium 4 panels:

1. Tamayo and the pictorial formulation

Painting is the axis of the work of Rufino Tamayo, an artist of Oaxacan origin in whose proposal we recognize various stages, as part of the search for an artistic language of his own. Tamayo's work is characterized by the definition of an iconography that re-signified both historical references and events that changed the course of modern history. This production, after a process of invention, achieved the construction of allegories capable of rethinking the pictorial system –

from traditional artistic genres to various iconographic references – distinctive in the use of color, textures, and symbols. In the 1920s, in dialogue with María Izquierdo, his artistic proposal became a new possibility for avant-garde painting in the post-revolutionary context. Tamayo was also characterized by an extensive foray into the mural format, a medium with which he experimented over the decades, an action that led him to expose an alternative proposal to early muralism headed by Los tres grandes (The Three Greats, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros). Tamayo reached, after several journeys and encounters in New York and Paris a fullness, a decisive moment for his commitment to abstract figuration to stand out as an alternative for a Mexican painting with universal expectations. Furthermore, his figure also functioned as a bridge between generations, being a reference of artistic change for younger artists.

2. Techniques, materials and artistic explorations

The artistic production of Rufino Tamayo encompasses numerous technical explorations, working from painting in various materials and formats. On the other hand, drawing meant the scope of his first visual inquiries, when working as a draftsman at the then-called Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía in archaeological explorations and projects related to folk art (arte popular). This model of studying different material productions was incorporated into his artistic conception, an action that allowed him to open a range of possibilities for representation. In addition, Tamayo was characterized by his work in graphics, as can be seen in the woodcut of his early years, up to the representative lithographs of his late stage. The sculptural medium was not exempt from his interests, since there are examples in which the colossal signs are an undoubted element. Likewise, the painter had interests to other media, either directly or indirectly, as can be seen in the cinematic exploration that he makes in the documentary Tamayo, made by Manuel González Casanova in 1967, or the one directed by Gary Conklin with a script by Octavio Paz, titled Tamayo. The Sources of His Art of 1972; and even the interest

that this author had in photographic practice.

3. Art criticism, magazines and debates from the press

Rufino Tamayo was directly linked to art criticism in several ways. In his formative years, he was close to the group of Los Contemporáneos and figures such as Xavier Villaurrutia, Jorge Cuesta and Gilberto Owen. The presence of his work was also part of the most outstanding cultural magazines, from Mexican Folkways in Mexico to New Masses in New York, representative of a transnational intellectual and artistic exchange. In the mid-twentieth century, his presence in the press was constant, since in a heated debate dedicated to the arts, Tamayo's voice maintained a strong presence in the form of attacks on the realistic proposal and specifically, the muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros. It was these statements that guided a series of discourses on painting and its forms of execution around a new world panorama. In this context, the dichotomy between figurative and abstract art, the national and the cosmopolitan, and the new humanism and dehumanization, governed these public confrontations throughout the expectations of Mexican art.

4. The museums. From collecting to the formation of institutions

Rufino Tamayo legacy in Mexican art directly impacted the conception of several cultural institutions. His work is not only part of the most important public and private collections, but also served as an active agent that intervened directly in the redefinition of national museums. In collaboration with the museographer Fernando Gamboa, Tamayo organized in 1974 a museum in Oaxaca dedicated to his collection of Mesoamerican art. This case stands out for its particularity, both in the notion of collecting from which it starts, and for its characteristic museographic arrangement, designed through the use of five colors for each room, inspired by Tamayo's artistic work. On the other hand, after a decade of careful and heterodox planning by Tamayo and his wife Olga, the Museo Rufino Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo was inaugurated in 1981 in Mexico City, also with the support of Fernando Gamboa. The prospect of this venue aimed to form a contemporary art collection from a representative selection of 170 pieces from the international scene, starting from

the works of Pablo Picasso, Henry Moore, Isamu Noguchi, Francis Bacon, George Segal, Helen Frankenthaler, Wifredo Lam, Roberto Matta, Jesús Rafael Soto, Louise Nevelson, and national references that aimed to offer an alternative version of Mexican art, through authors such as Mathias Goeritz, Carlos Mérida, Kasuya Sakai, Lilia Carrillo, Manuel Felguérez, Vicente Rojo and Francisco Toledo. Aware of a new stage in the forms of organization of culture, the Oaxacan artist modified nationalist expectations and total control of the public sphere by the State to adapt to the developing neoliberal policies, since this museum was established with the support of private investment.

Forms for participation:

1. Paper proposals must be unpublished and presented in Spanish or English, and have a tentative title and a maximum abstract of 500 words about the work to be developed. Only one proposal will be received per person or per group in case of collective proposals. The abstract must be explicitly indicated within which panel (s) considers that the paper is inserted, and a curricular synthesis of no more than 150 words will be attached, highlighting their main academic works, as well as the institutional affiliation.
2. The deadline for receiving proposals will be **April 6, 2024**. The proposals will be examined by the Scientific Committee composed of specialists from the IIE-UNAM and external, as well as by the Organizing Committee of the Conference, who will select them based on criteria of quality and thematic relevance.
3. The decision of the Organizing Committee will be announced with the publication of results on **May 31, 2024**. The selected speakers will not pay registration fee.
4. The accepted participants undertake to present their paper on the day and time assigned during the Coloquio Rufino Tamayo. Múltiples visiones, to be held in person in the City of Oaxaca on **August 27, 28 and 29, 2024**.
5. The speakers will have to fill out a form regarding the copyright, their images and the Internet transmission on the day of their intervention.

6. The deadline for submission of the paper that will be read at the Conference will be August 13, 2024 in order for the discussants to prepare their interventions.
7. Any matter not foreseen in this call will be resolved by the Scientific Committee with the support of the Coordination of the Unidad Oaxaca.

University City as of February 26, 2024.

Organizing Committee

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