



Joaquin  
TORRES-GARCIA  
(1874-1949)

of  
URUGUAY

April 19 to May 15, 1961

PAN AMERICAN UNION, Washington , D.C.

A few days before his death, in 1949, Joaquin Torres Garcia dispatched, at the request of the then Section of Visual Arts, a selection of compositions by himself and by artists associated with his workshop in Montevideo, for presentation in Washington. Held posthumously, the exhibition attracted such favorable attention that ever since the Pan American Union has been desirous of devoting a one-man show to the work of an Uruguayan who ranks not only as a forerunner of contemporary trends in Latin American but also as a painter of world-wide recognition.

Torres-Garcia was born in Montevideo in 1874. At the age of seventeen he went to Spain and settled in Barcelona, where he established contact with local avant-garde artists, among them Pablo Picasso. At different times Torres-Garcia lived in France as well as Spain, and, largely through the group known as Cercle et Carre, he became associated with the international movement known as Constructivism, then in its early stages. This brought him into close contact with Van Doesburg and Mondrian.

Torres-Garcia adopted the principle of organizing the picture within a framework of vertical and horizontal rigidity. He never, however, abandoned the symbolic representation of objects of nature. While other Constructivists plunged boldly into the realm of non-figurative painting, Torres-Garcia continued to use the representational element, albeit in a highly cryptic fashion, producing as it were plastic hieroglyphics. In these he sought to incorporate the spirit of ancient forms taken from pre-Columbian art — a world in which another great master of our time, Paul Klee, was also seeking inspiration.

Torres-Garcia returned to Montevideo after 1934, and there he began an apostolic existence, devoted to the dissemination of his ideals. He founded a workshop, which was attended not only by his own two sons but also by a number of other young Uruguayan artists, whose endeavor brought them well-earned recognition. A man of conviction, Torres-Garcia was often involved in polemics, defending his theories. He wrote books and gave more than five hundred lectures, seeking to win disciples. He advocated an "art of the Americas" for the world, expressed in an international language of permanent values. As the French critic Jean Cassou said, "He was the right man to speak to his countrymen in a language they could understand: his experience had brought him back to first principles, the natural point of departure for his continent, which now suddenly, directly, enthusiastically, with clear and candid purity, opened itself to an immense future."

As a special tribute to a master who engaged until his death in championing a great cause, the Pan American Union has made available, by exception, the space normally occupied by its permanent collection, in order to permit the showing of the most significant compositions of Torres-Garcia that it has been possible to assemble in the United States. The exhibition has been made possible through the cooperation of Miss Rose Fried, the owner of a New York gallery bearing her name, which is the exclusive agent for the work of Torres Garcia. After the presentation in Washington, the exhibit will be circulated to a limited number of museums in the United States and in Europe, under the sponsorship of the Traveling Exhibition Service of the Smithsonian Institution. Appreciation is here expressed both to the Smithsonian and to Miss Rose Fried for the assistance they have so generously lent in connection with this presentation.

## TITLES OF WORKS- **TORRES-GARCIA**

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1. Construction
2. Five Toned Object On A White Background
3. Construction
4. Construction
5. Construction In White
- ⑥. Construction In Five Tones With Universal Man In Red
7. Composition
8. Constructive Structure With White Lines
9. Construction
10. Indo-American Graphic
11. Construction
12. Construction
13. Constructivist Fish
14. Construction in Five Tones
15. Structured Forms With Reliefs in White
16. Double Line Construction From The Earth To The Shadows
17. Construction
18. City With A Constructivist Port and Bridge
19. Constructivist Art
20. Construction
21. Universal Composition
22. Reminiscent Constructions
23. Construction
24. Figure

# ALMACEN

