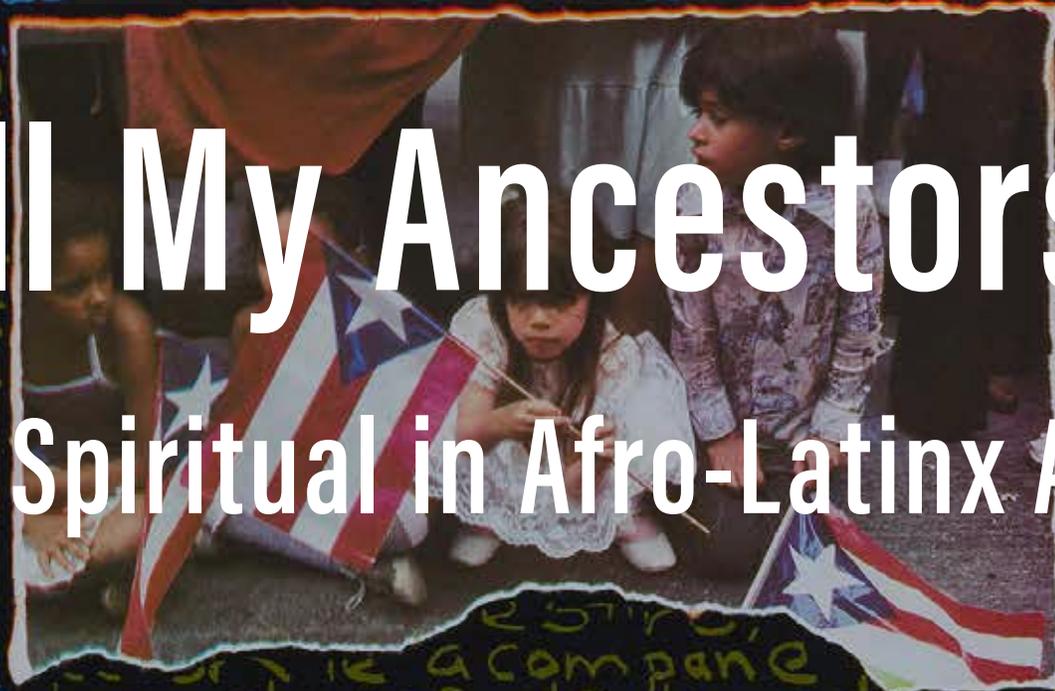


All My Ancestors

The Spiritual in Afro-Latinx Art



February 10–June 18, 2022
The Printed Image Gallery
Brandywine Workshop and Archives

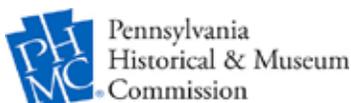
“The radical politics of emerging Black and Brown artists in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America demanded a radical aesthetic shift away from Euro-centricity to a new Afro-centric aesthetic. As a result, Afro-descendant artists were thrust into the vanguard of contemporary art exploring new content and form.”

— Dr. Arturo Lindsay

The following provide support that helps fund the Visiting Artist Program, this exhibition, and free public programs at the Brandywine Workshop and Archives:



The Friends of Brandywine



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An exhibition of prints from the permanent collections of Brandywine Workshop and Archives, Coronado Studio and The Serie Project, Coronado printstudio, Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA, Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, and Taller Experimental de Gráfica de Habana, and loans from individual artists. The exhibition was curated by Dr. Tatiana Reinoza.

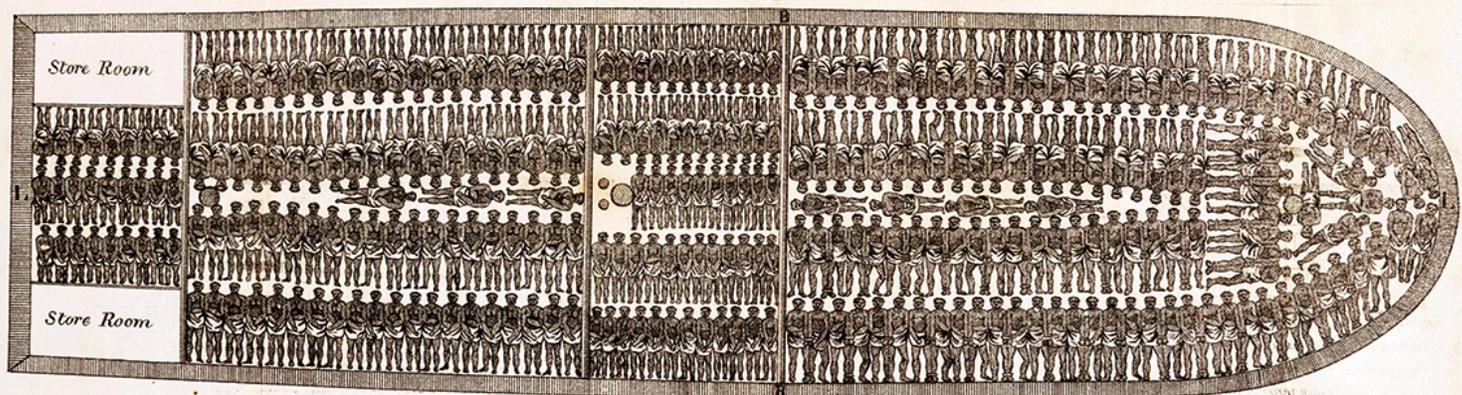
"The artists in *All My Ancestors* invoke the spiritual as an overarching framework that allows for the veneration of the Black and mixed-race body, the mourning for those souls lost in the Middle Passage, the syncretism of Afro-diasporic religious practices, the connection to land, and as a method to resist colonialism and capitalism's disregard for Black life."

— Dr. Tatiana Reinoza

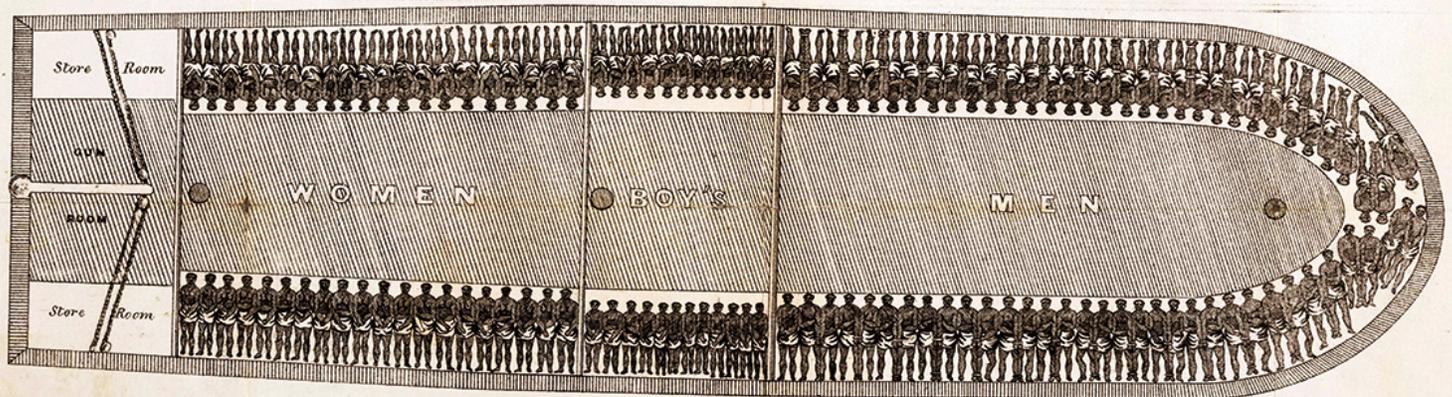
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PLAN OF LOWER DECK WITH THE STOWAGE OF 292 SLAVES
 130 OF THESE BEING STOWED UNDER THE SHELVES AS SHEWN IN FIGURE B & FIGURE 5.



PLAN SHEWING THE STOWAGE OF 130 ADDITIONAL SLAVES ROUND THE WINGS OR SIDES OF THE LOWER DECK BY MEANS OF PLATFORMS OR SHELVES
 (IN THE MANNER OF GALLERIES IN A CHURCH) THE SLAVES STOWED ON THE SHELVES AND BELOW THEM HAVE ONLY A HEIGHT OF 2 FEET 7 INCHES
 BETWEEN THE BEAMS: AND FAR LESS UNDER THE BEAMS. See Fig 1.



Acknowledgments

All My Ancestors: The Spiritual in Afro-Latinx Art is a fitting title to an exhibition that connects the experiences and influences, individually and collectively, of artists who embrace their diverse heritage as a product of slavery and the cultural and spiritual legacies that have survived among people of the African diaspora. In a real sense, the 20 artists presented in the exhibition have used their art to document and preserve, sharing diverse and mostly hidden narratives that scholars are only recently addressing in their research and publications. Brandywine is extremely grateful to the curator, **Dr. Tatiana Reinoza**, a scholar of contemporary printmaking, and her role in building global connections within and beyond the Latinx art community.

Dr. Reinoza's catalog essay "highlights the ways Latinx artists invoke the spiritual to address their African ancestry in the Americas." She has curated the exhibition pulling primarily from the permanent collection of Brandywine Workshop and Archives (BWA), which is rich in African, African American, Caribbean, and Latinx prints. The BWA collection consists of works by national and international visiting artists-in-residence and acquisitions of original prints created in other workshops. We are thrilled to highlight these important printmaking organizations and their contributions in support of Afro-Latinx artists. And we wish to acknowledge the leaders who have made such acquisitions possible over several decades: Jill and the late Sam Coronado (Coronado Studio and The Serie Project, Austin), Deborah Cullen-Morales and Robert (Bob) Blackburn (Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, New York City), the collective Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA, New York City; master printer Pepe Coronado (Coronado printstudio, Austin); as well as artists Eduardo "Choco" Roca and Ibrahim Miranda of Taller Experimental de Gráfica, Havana, Cuba; and Diógenes Ballester, whose set of prints were produced during a residency in China. Several loans were also generously provided by artists Celea Guevara, Vladimir Cybil Charlier, and Yelaine Rodriguez.

We are also grateful to the artist-scholar **Dr. Arturo Lindsay**, who contributed a very personal, reflective essay on his experiences and the connections he makes as an artist of African descent born in Panama. Dr. Lindsay, and his fellow Afro-Latinx artists whose work is presented and celebrated in *All My Ancestors*, represent a broad range of geographic backgrounds and artistic practices. Their practices attest to the complicated role heritage and place—and the religious, social, and political legacies of colonialism—have in how artists frame their perspectives and, consequently, the art they create. In addition, we are honored to have **Shelley Langdale**, Curator and Head of Modern Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Art, contribute an introduction to the catalog. Ms. Langdale is well respected within the field for her knowledge of printmaking and contemporary diverse art.

BWA is grateful to the **National Endowment for the Arts**, which is the primary funder for the exhibition. We also acknowledge the critical operating support provided by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, the Dedalus Foundation, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, as well as the Friends of Brandywine and Board members whose contributions help support programming. I am personally grateful to the staff members and interns who have assisted in the production of *All My Ancestors* and its catalog, which is being shared free online in an abridged version at **Artura.org**. A special thank you goes out to **Matthew Singer, PhD**, our editor-in-chief.

The opening of this exhibition in the Printed Image Gallery represents the official start of our year-long celebration of BWA's 50th anniversary in 2022. We are excited to present several new exhibitions, special publications, and plan the Lifetime Achievement Awards Gala for the fall. These activities and others presented by our partner institutions and national advisory committee will showcase the broad universe that is BWA and our aspirations for global networking, especially as it relates to artists of African descent across the Americas.

Allan L. Edmunds
President

All My Ancestors: An Introduction

Shelley R. Langdale

The timing of this exhibition and accompanying catalog could not be better. As we fully enter the third decade of the 21st century, we find ourselves increasingly challenged by major dichotomies in our lives: renewed nationalist interests that conflict with the realities of the vital interdependence of economies, factory production, and trade across the globe; and technological and other supposed advances in “civilization” that (1) are systemically designed for the primary benefit of wealthy white populations at the continuing expense of the lives and cultural heritages of Indigenous, Black, Brown, Asian, and Asian Pacific Islander people, and (2) further damage the already devastated natural environment on which our lives depend. More generally, there is a tendency toward an oversimplification of opposing/alternative concepts that misrepresent a world population that has become ever more interwoven and complex.

All My Ancestors is an important contribution to ongoing scholarship that seeks to expand and enrich historical narratives through the synthesized inclusion of multiple perspectives, rather than contracting and dividing these into parallel, sometimes competing accounts. As **Dr. Arturo Lindsay** outlines in his excellent essay, the mobility and dissemination of people dramatically increased during the 20th century, resulting in major demographic shifts, particularly in major cities. Increased modes and ease of transport and two world wars were among the contributing factors that accelerated the displacement, migration, and dramatic diversification of populations that were initiated by the ravages of colonialization and slavery in earlier centuries. These fundamental demographic changes gave rise to activist movements against the sociopolitical injustices embedded in the prevailing white, Eurocentric governmental and societal structures in the US and other so-called “developed” countries of the “Western world” that monopolized most of the global economic and political power.

There is no question that advances have been made in breaking down xenophobic, race-based and religious biases, and other systemic injustices directed at particular populations in some societies. However, as has become painfully clear, particularly in the last ten years, much of the prejudice has been driven to fester underground rather than dissipate. Some of the most blatant displays of Jim Crow-era racism are no longer

legal. However, ingrained cultural attitudes expressed in the form of microaggressions, unchecked law-enforcement brutality, the continuation of policies that are inherently biased, and repercussions of earlier prejudicial regulations continue to prevail.

The great challenge of this moment in our history is reckoning with the perplexing divide between resistance and willingness to reevaluate assumptions. The imperative is to question our roles in our communities, whether as the target of oppression or a knowing or complicit participant in perpetuating longstanding discrimination. We must also actively advance recognition of prejudice where it exists and seek opportunity for self-determination either for ourselves or, if we are in positions of privilege, for others who have been repressed, by lobbying for and enacting dramatic systemic changes that eliminate bias.

As Dr. Lindsay notes, alongside the development of activist civil-rights organizations and movements, “the arts became crucial to expressing the desired autonomy and self-determination.” There has been some unification and overlap of efforts among Black and Brown artists of African, Latinx, and Caribbean heritage in promoting Pan-Africanism, in a conscious departure from dominant Eurocentric-defined aesthetics, as undertaken initially by the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. However, the seemingly inherent impulse of humankind to differentiate by hierarchy complicates issues around racial identity, particularly in relation to skin color, even within Black, Brown, and Latinx populations. In her essay, **Dr. Tatiana Reinoza** discusses the example of Mexican theorist José Vasconcelos’ conception of *mestizaje*, in which people of light-skinned, mixed indigenous Latin American and European races are seen as superior to those of dark-skinned, indigenous Latin American and African descent. Recent scholarship and artistic practices have shown greater emphasis on intersections of identity, gender, transnational struggles, and shared diasporic experience, particularly in relation to slavery. Exhibitions such as *Afro-Atlantic Histories* (organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil, in collaboration with National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, where it is on view from April 10 to July 22, 2022) and *Afro Syncretic* (the Latinx Project exhibition mentioned by Dr. Reinoza, held in 2019–2020) are some notable examples.

All My Ancestors: The Spiritual in Afro-Latinx Art and Dr. Reinoza’s accompanying essay call attention to the important work of Afro-Latinx artists and the influential printmaking workshops that provided them with encouragement and opportunities to explore issues of racial, cultural, and national identity in a supportive, collaborative environment, in a medium through which their ideas could be disseminated. Many art museums and collecting institutions recently surveying their collections have, unsurprisingly, confirmed the dominant representation of white male artists. The most diverse area of their collections, in

which more BIPOC, AAPI, women, and LGBTQIA artists are represented—if far from adequately—were typically found in departments of prints and drawings, often followed by photographs. There are several reasons for this discrepancy. One is the “democratic” nature of prints, which are created in multiple original impressions that can be distributed widely, generally at lower market values; this, together with the affordability of basic printmaking materials, has resulted in greater accessibility for both artist/makers and audience/collectors. Additionally, the fact that prints—relief, intaglio, stencil (e.g., screen print), and lithograph—have long been placed among the lower ranks of fine art hierarchies has meant that institutional guidelines for collecting them have often been less precisely stipulated. This allowed for the acquisition of prints by a more diverse range of artists while other areas of collections were more narrowly focused and linked to a canon defined by predominantly white, male-run establishments.

In the 20th century, the communal printmaking workshops run by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in various cities across the US during the Great Depression and the launch of Taller Gráfica Popular in Mexico City in 1937, followed by Stanley William Hayter’s temporary, New York City-based branch of his Paris-founded Atelier 17 workshop and Robert Blackburn’s establishment of the Printmaking Workshop in New York City in the 1940s, laid the groundwork for what is now known as the “print renaissance” in the US in the 1960s. Discussions of this “renaissance” have typically focused on Universal Limited Art Editions (West Islip, New York), Tamarind Lithography Workshop (initially Los Angeles, now the Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque), Crown Point Press (San Francisco), and Gemini G.E.L. (Los Angeles), which were founded between 1957 and 1966 and, until relatively recently, worked primarily with white artists.

Robert Blackburn’s New York workshop—the first established and run by a Black person in the US in 1948—has only begun to be recognized for its enormous contribution to the field as a place known for fostering experimentation, mentorship, and collaboration among a wide range of artists from diverse backgrounds, many of whom might not have had opportunity to produce their work otherwise. Additionally, Blackburn himself is finally receiving the attention he deserves, both as an artist and a lithography printer who collaborated with artists at ULAE as well as in his own workshop. When constructing narratives of 20th-century printmaking, however, essential work remains to be done to incorporate the important endeavors undertaken by numerous printmaking workshops in locations across the United States and its neighboring countries that have remained under the radar.

Brandywine Workshop and Archives in Philadelphia and Self Help Graphics & Art in Los Angeles are among two distinguished printmaking organizations established in the early 1970s with the expressed purpose of providing opportunity to non-white artists. Self Help began with the mission, and continues, to foster the creativity of Chicana and Latina artists through innovative approaches to printmaking and other visual art forms. Both workshops emphasize the importance of education, serving the community and local artists as well as facilitating national and international exchanges, and they share a commitment to art as a significant agent in advancing social justice. Brandywine, from its inception, has undertaken an expansive approach to its mission of diversity and inclusion, working with Black, Brown, Latina, AAPI, Asian, and white artists of all heritages and intersections of race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. It was founded as a nonprofit organization and, in addition to printmaking residencies for artists, it has organized hundreds of educational programs and community projects, as well as national and international exchanges and exhibitions of prints that have traveled across the US and to Wales, Cuba, and numerous other countries in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East over the decades.

The Brandywine Workshop and Archives has become a repository for an extraordinary collection of prints not only created or given by artists with whom the shop has worked, but includes donations of prints from the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop (through the artist's estate), Self Help Graphics & Art (Los Angeles), Sam Coronado's Coronado Studio and The Serie Project (Austin), Taller Experimental de Gráfica de Habana (Cuba), and the Hatch-Billops Collection (New York City). Brandywine's holdings are now serving as the foundation for the organization's free online database of contemporary art, **Artura.org**, which further disseminates awareness and knowledge of artists who are still being left out of art-historical narratives. The works featured in *All My Ancestors* are drawn from Brandywine's permanent print collection with loans from Pepe Coronado's Austin-based Coronado printstudio (not to be confused with Sam Coronado's Austin workshop, 1992–2013), and the art collective Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA in New York City.

After 50 years of championing the diversity of artists of all races, genders, nationalities, and religions, and being at the forefront in efforts to expand the white-defined art historical canon, I cannot imagine a more fitting tribute both to the extraordinary accomplishments of Brandywine over the years, and the direction for its future. The scholarship and fascinating insights of Dr. Lindsay and Dr. Reinoza into the multivalent connections with African-based forms of spirituality in Afro-Latina prints will play a vital role in fostering greater appreciation



Arturo Lindsay, *Ye of Ejisu*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches

Dancing Aché with the Orishas in My Life and In My Work

Arturo Lindsay, DArts

The aftermath of World War II gave rise to a growing Latinx immigrant population in large metropolitan cities in the United States that were also the important art centers of the nation. Many of these immigrants were veterans who were born in countries in the Caribbean basin where African belief systems and the cultural traditions of the people remained strong. The largest segment of this population were Puerto Ricans, citizens of the United States who did not require passports or visas to live and work in the US. After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, a second wave of Latinx immigrants began arriving on US soil, along with their *orishas*—African deities. The influx of Afro-Latinxs to urban centers in the North coincided with the Great Migration (1916–1970) that saw over six million Black Americans fleeing the humiliation of second-class citizenship in the South under Jim Crow laws and the lawlessness and terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan.

The prevailing xenophobic, anti-immigrant sentiments, policies, and laws of this nation made the lives of these diverse migrant and immigrant populations unnecessarily burdensome. For Latinxs of African descent, however, there was an added burden of racism and bigotry directed at their Black bodies. Afro-Latinxs suffered the same indignities as their Black American brethren facing discrimination in the workplace, education, and housing. For many, these societal inequities made the path to achieving the “American Dream” virtually impossible. Essentially, they were being denied their “unalienable Right” for “the pursuit of Happiness” affirmed in the Declaration of Independence.

That said, the sons and daughters of immigrants and migrants joined the Baby Boom generation that was less tolerant of the prevailing socio-political injustices of the era.

They raised their voices and their fists in rebellion.

In the 1950s, the Puerto Rican Independence Party began advocating for independence on the island and in Latinx barrios in the US. Under the leadership of Don Pedro Albizu Campos, the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party engaged in armed insurrection against the United States. Although the modern Civil Rights Movement began in the South with a non-violent agenda in the 1960s, by the 1970s Black and

Brown Baby Boomers were growing dissatisfied with the slow progress of non-violence. They turned to the Black Power Movement that advocated a militant stance demanding immediate Black autonomy and self-determination. Organizations such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Black Panther Party became advocates for a more "radical" position. Joining these organizations were the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican movement that advocated for civil and human rights in the cities where they lived in the US and on the island of Puerto Rico. Alliances between the Young Lords and the Black Panthers, often living in neighboring communities and experiencing the same indignities, led to Black and Brown alliances.

Concurrently, the arts became crucial to expressing the desired autonomy and self-determination. Baby Boomers began creating Afrocentric works of art, leading to the birth of the Black Arts Movement. Black Consciousness and Pan-Africanism became the prevailing ideologies, the purpose of which was to uplift Afro-descendants regardless of country of origin. The concept of an African diaspora shifted the established perception of the Black body from a "minority" existing in a racist nation, to a "majority" living in a global community.

The radical politics of emerging Black and Brown artists in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America demanded a radical aesthetic shift away from Eurocentricity to a new Afrocentric aesthetic. As a result, Afro-descendant artists were thrust into the vanguard of contemporary art exploring new content and form. The actions of Latinx avant-garde artists of the late-20th century were like the avant-garde modernists earlier in the century who explored new aesthetic terrain to complement their radical politics. A generation after Wifredo Lam trailblazed with the orishas into new terrain, scores of Afro-Latinxs, Latinxs, and US African American artists followed by inviting African deities into their work.

Like many Afro-Latinxs of that era, I walked away from a Roman Catholic upbringing that was proving to be irrelevant, if not complicit with a racial capitalist power structure that was oppressing Black and Brown people worldwide. However, once I left the church, I realized that there was a vacuum in my soul. As a spiritual being inhabiting a human body, I needed spiritual nourishing.

At the height of the Pan-Africanist, Black Power, and the Black Arts movements, I was a graduate art student intent on infusing my work with African spirituality. Rosa, a Puerto Rican friend, grad school cohort, and *santera* introduced me to Santería.¹ Rosa kept a small altar in her apartment with a polychrome ceramic statue of *La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre* (*Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre*), Oshún's Christian "counterpart." From the moment

I met Oshún, I fell in love. I developed a strong affinity for her and created a small altar dedicated to her in my studio. Oshún is the *orisha* of love and beauty. She is the goddess of the Oshún River in Nigeria and the patron saint of Cuba. She loves honey, her color is yellow, and her metals are brass, copper, and now gold. She is known to be flirtatious and can lure the strongest of men into doing her bidding. She is often equated with Aphrodite and Venus. Oshún is the personification of pure female power.

As a student with limited funds and twin sons to support, my most valuable commodity was time. As a result, the sacrifice of time was the greatest offering I could make to this wonderful *orisha* that was changing my life. I considered the offering of time as my *ebó*—sacrifice. I began and ended each work session with a prayer asking Oshún to invest my art and my life with her powerful *aché*—life force.

My love for Oshún was and *is* intense. Essentially, she became the embodiment of every woman I ever loved and will ever love. I also believe that she loved me and as a result, encouraged me in the late 1970s to become an *iyawo*—an initiate of Santería—under the tutelage of my *madrina*,² Dr. Aleida Portuondo in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, my initiation was interrupted by an urgent need to return to the Northeast. The long commute to and from DC to continue my initiation proved to be unfeasible. Not willing to abandon the *orishas*, I vowed to continue studying the religion as a scholar and venerating the *orishas* in my life and in my art.

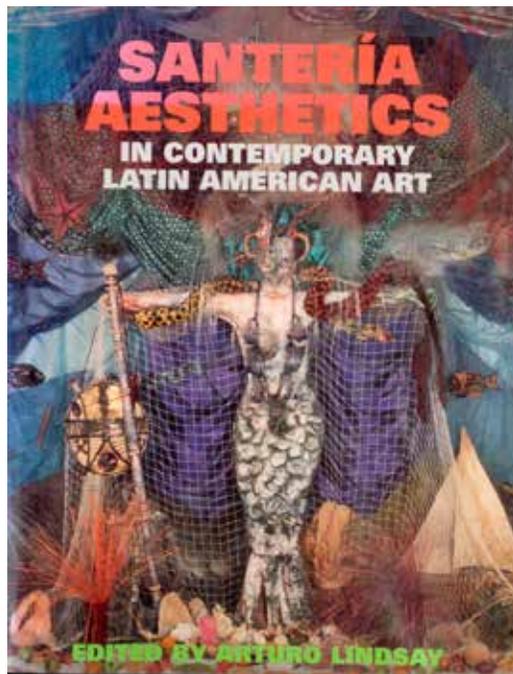


Arturo Lindsay, *Homenaje a Osanyín*, 1991, mixed-media installation with music and scent, 457.2 cm x 609.6 cm x 439.4 cm (180 in. x 240 in. x 173 in.)
Courtesy of the artist

The highly decorative altars found in the homes of devotees led to a series of art installations honoring the *orishas*. The first major installation, created in 1991 at the High Museum of Art shortly after my arrival in Atlanta to teach at Spelman College, was entitled *Homenaje a Osanyín*. This very large multimedia/multidisciplinary installation was created as a prayer of supplication to Osanyín for an herbal cure for AIDS, which was devastating the world at that time. Osanyín is the orisha of herbal medicines. The installation, which consisted of a very large painting featuring several orishas in a jungle scene, is intended to be a gesture, a sign of respect, to Wifredo Lam's 1943 seminal painting *La Jungla*. The painting was hung on the museum wall and was framed by dozens of freshly cut bamboo poles, palm trees, flowers, candles, offerings of fruits, a Yoruba *Opa Osanyín* ritual herbalist staff, and Roman Catholic religious statues of saints. The fragrances of the flowers and the plants, along with barely audible recordings of Santería music blended with sound recordings of the rainforest, were used to provide added sensory experiences on a subliminal level.

I intentionally “loaded” the work with iconography that could be “read” by santerxs, Yoruba, and Santería scholars. That said, I also paid a great deal of attention to form, scale, color, line, texture, and composition, so that the general public would be awed by an aesthetic experience of a tropical rainforest dedicated to a Yoruba orisha located in a pristine modernist museum in the Bible Belt.

The following year, at Chastain Arts Center in Atlanta, I presented *Las Siete Potencias Africanas*—a solo exhibition that was seminal to my growth as an artist and scholar. To provide context for the work, instead of an artist talk I organized a symposium entitled *Santería Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Art*, which featured some of the leading scholars on African aesthetics and contemporary art. I edited the proceedings of the symposium, and the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press published the manuscript in 1996. Shortly after, it was recognized as a pioneering text that explores the legacy of the Yoruba aesthetic from antiquity to contemporary art theory and practice. It became a “must-read” for contemporary artists, critics, and curators.



To see is to know. But how can we know the unseen—the histories, the stories, or the names of a people that were undocumented or erased?

I asked myself that question late one evening as I looked at the sun setting behind the hills on the bay of Portobelo on the Caribbean coast of Panama. The view from my studio faces the ruins of a dock that was, at one time, the first encounter with *tierra firme* for many weary, shackled, and enslaved Black feet whose journeys had begun months earlier in Africa.

The setting sun in Portobelo reflects off the cerulean blue sky and puffy white clouds onto the still waters of the bay, producing a rather unique effect of light that seemingly glows from beneath the surface of the water. I wondered that evening...*could this light be the souls of those who had perished at sea?*

The following morning, I began imagining and imaging the anonymous faces of the children who did not arrive in Portobelo on those slavers—*los desaparecidos*. My drawing session attracted neighborhood children who began to guess which of

their friends were represented in my drawings. Their guessing game made me realize that my drawings were probably not that anonymous after all. My drawings were most likely informed by the faces of the children I saw every day in my neighborhood. Moreover, maybe the faces in my drawings bore phenotypic resemblances to the abducted children who had perished at sea.

So began my journey. I became obsessed with knowing the identity of the children in my drawings.

*I wanted to know their stories,
I wanted to hear their laughter,
I wanted to listen to their voices,
I wanted to know their names.*

I returned to Atlanta that fall with a portfolio of line drawings of faces that I later reworked into a series of prints during an artist residency at Brandywine Workshop and Archives in Philadelphia (see pages 28–29). I chose traditional African ethnic names for my children. Their stories, however, eluded me. Finally, I approached my friend and colleague, the poet Opal Moore, and asked her to live with my children for a while to see if they would tell her their stories.

Through the magical rituals of seeking, seeing, and imaging that is poetry, they gave Opal fragmented stories of their lives in Africa before their abduction.

*They also told her of their journeys across the sea.
They told her about their mothers and fathers
They told her about their Gods
The stories they told Opal were the stories of
how they lived,
how they loved and
how they died.*

In 2001 Opal, a descendant of the Great Migration to Chicago, and me, a Latin American immigrant to New York City, began a collaboration that honors our collective ancestral past in a series of projects entitled *Children of Middle Passage* that is still in progress today. In

so doing, art became the key that allowed us to see the faces and hear the voices of the children that others wished to erase. Since the Brandywine print series, we have shared the Children with countless others in poems, art exhibitions, videos on the internet, a performance-art ritual, and in a series of lectures/performances in the United States and abroad. The complete portfolio of prints is included in this exhibition along with the work of 19 other artists who are likewise exploring their African ancestry through spiritual lenses.

We are living in an era wherein lies are preferred over the truth; where vulgarity is accepted in the presence of children; where disrespect of our elders is commonplace; where young Black bodies are less valued than the bodies of our enslaved ancestors. We are living in an era where evil has possessed the souls of elected officials and good is regarded as a weakness.

All My Ancestors: The Spiritual in Afro-Latinx Art is a visual art *bembé*³ that invokes the spiritual and appeals to our ancestors for divine intervention. *All My Ancestors* tells our stories and highlights the beauty of our people.

Endnotes

1 A *santera* (female) or *santero* (male) is a practitioner of Santería. Loosely translated, *Santería* means "the way of the saints." Etymologically, the term originates with the practice of enslaved Yoruba disguising their orishas with the iconography of Roman Catholic saints to continue their religious practices incognito. It is one of many terms used to refer to Yoruba religious practices in Cuba and other parts of America including the United States and the Caribbean. It is also known as Regla de Ocha and Lucumí. In Brazil, it is called Candomblé.

2 Literally translated, *madrina*, and the male counterpart, *padrino*, mean godmother and godfather, respectively. In Santería, it refers to an initiate's "parents" in the religion. This is usually the person that introduced the initiate to the religion and continues to provide spiritual guidance. According to my *madrina*, her family has been practicing the religion since the period of enslavement.

3 A *bembé* is a Yoruba/Santería/Lucumí drumming celebration of ritual chanting and dancing intended to please the *orishas* and to induce possession.



Figure 2: Keith Morrison, *The Tango*, 2012, offset lithograph, 21 1/2 x 15 inches

All My Ancestors: The Spiritual in Afro-Latinx Art

Tatiana Reinoza, PhD

This exhibition seeks to highlight the ways Latinx artists invoke the spiritual to address their African ancestry in the Americas. I use the term spiritual, in the broadest sense, to address the use of religious beliefs, sacred iconography, the recognition of a collective connection to the cosmic or divine, and as knowledge passed down through generations to deal with the psychic and psychological toll of hardship. The artists in *All My Ancestors* invoke the spiritual as an overarching framework that allows for the veneration of the Black and Brown body, the mourning for those souls lost in the Middle Passage, the syncretism of Afro-diasporic religious practices, the connection to land, and as a method to resist colonialism and capitalism's disregard for Black life.

Latinx identities have often been defined in relation to *mestizaje*, the racial mixture or "cosmic race" as espoused by the Mexican theorist José Vasconcelos, that would promote interracial marriage and procreation to counter the premise of racial purity in the US. However, much of the focus was on combining Indigenous and European races to whiten the national makeup, while disavowing the African presence. We now know that the transatlantic slave trade brought Africans and gave birth to their descendants all throughout the Western Hemisphere. Of the 11 million who survived the Middle Passage, most Africans worked, settled, intermarried, and eventually regained their freedom in the Caribbean and Latin America.¹ Only about 450,000 were brought to the United States, by comparison.² Yet the national discourses of these Spanish-speaking countries often erased or willfully negated the African population in order to deny their ancestors' full rights to citizenship and continue the *mestizo* fictions that privileged Indigenous and European ancestry. The artists in this exhibition are as diverse as the late scholars Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores envisioned in their pioneering edited volume *The Afro-Latin@ Reader*, as "people of African descent in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and by extension those of African descent in the United States whose origins are in Latin America and the Caribbean."³ These creatives use their platforms of self-expression to replace a vague or whitened notion of Latinx identity with the lived experience of being Afro-Latinx and to call attention to the transnational struggles and self-affirmations that unite them in diaspora.⁴

While much is known about the influential role of Afro-Latinx artists in the realm of music, performance, and literature, this exhibition focuses on their contributions to the medium of printmaking. The democratic art form par excellence, printmaking with its basis on collaboration, reproduction, and distribution, has been an important platform to think through some of these ideas of what it means to be Black in a Latinx community, how one navigates forms of belonging or unbelonging, and how to reckon with the weight of the history of slavery. The exhibition draws from the print archives of the Brandywine Workshop and Archives, Philadelphia; Sam Coronado's Coronado Studio and The Serie Project, Austin; Pepe Coronado's Coronado printstudio, Austin and New York City; the art collective Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA, New York City; Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, New York City; and the Taller Experimental de Gráfica, Havana, Cuba. These workshops and their residency programs have prioritized giving voice and helping shape an Afro-Latinx diasporic consciousness, though much of it has gone unrecognized, and this is the first time we bring together this corpus of prints, creating a relational matrix between these sites of production.

All My Ancestors also comes on the heels of groundbreaking exhibitions such as Yelaine Rodriguez's *Afro Syncretic* (2019). Sponsored by the Latinx Project at New York University, and hosted by the gallery of NYU's King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, *Afro Syncretic* presented the work of nine artists whose art centers diasporic Blackness within Latinx culture. Rodriguez noted, "These artists are part of a contemporary reassessment of African influences in Latinx communities that rejects trends to separate and undermine Blackness."⁵ Afro-Latinx people in the US often suffer the indignities of facing discrimination given the country's Black and white racial binary, but also the troubling racial paradigms of anti-Blackness within Latinx communities which came from the colonial caste systems that favored whiteness. As Henry Louis Gates mentions from his research in Brazil, "the stamp of 'slave' had never quite disappeared from the Afro-Brazilian experience, and connotations of inferiority associated with slavery shadowed the darkest and 'most African' of the Brazilian people."⁶ Furthermore, the legacy of slavery and its narratives of victimization obscured the many Black social movements such as the *quilombos*, communities of maroons escaped enslaved people, who actively resisted and fought for self-determination.⁷ These associations to slavery, and subsequent stigmas of poverty and disenfranchisement, placed many Latin Americans, and their migrant and diasporic Latinx counterparts, in denial of their African roots. Exhibitions such as *Afro Syncretic* and *All My Ancestors* demonstrate how this time of racial reckoning in the US is overturning some of these deeply seeded biases and calling for a reevaluation and acknowledgment of all ancestral heritages. Moreover, the fields of African American art and Latinx art must carve the space to foster the study of Afro-Latinx art with its diverse narratives and aesthetic forms.

Scholar Marta Moreno Vega, among the first to document the spiritual dimension of Afro-Latinx art, argues that the presence of *ashé*, the sacred life force, is what established a common aesthetic vision for the art of the Black diaspora.⁸ A West African philosophical concept of the Yoruba Ifá tradition, the divine energy of *ashé* grants power to the human, animal, natural, and spirit world. Although these beliefs traveled from Africa to the Americas, and later from Latin America to the US in the formation of an Afro-Latinx diaspora, certain icons, dances, oral histories, and music held true to this belief that all things animate and inanimate are endowed with spirit. Thus, ancestral memory and ancestor worship took on a special significance in the conceptualization of *ashé*. According to Moreno Vega, ancestors act as intermediaries between the divine and the human, appeal to the gods and goddesses that survived the Middle Passage, restore balance, and bring about good fortune.⁹ Through these veiled forms of ancestor worship, disguised under syncretic rituals that correspond with the Catholic Church for fear of criminal persecution, African descendants resisted cultural assimilation.

During a residency at the Brandywine Workshop and Archives in Philadelphia, the Afro-Panamanian artist **Arturo Lindsay** developed an offset lithography series that is the centerpiece of this exhibition, titled ***Children of Middle Passage***, 2001 (figure 3), which honors the ancestors by memorializing the countless children who perished aboard slave ships crossing the Atlantic.

Each of the ten prints in the suite depicts an angelic-faced African child whose silhouetted body emerges from the bowels of a diagrammed ship or an instrument of restraint. Each child's face is illuminated by a halo reminiscent of Byzantine icons. Lindsay invites viewers to venerate these children by placing them within the shape of a niche altar. In contrast to his colorful installations and paintings, which often reference the vibrant landscapes of his native Panama or the Caribbean seascapes of his hometown, the port city of Colón, Lindsay limited his palette to a monochromatic black—the color that early-modern Europe associated with darkness, death, and the devil—but to which he attributes with a sense of beauty. To undo the epistemic violence of anonymity that rendered these youth casualties of history, Lindsay titled each portrait with a traditional African name and a corresponding village. ***Ile of Ile Ife***, for example, hails from the holy city that the Yoruba considered the birthplace of humankind. The artist infused an Afro-diasporic worldview to the print series by adding symbols of Santería, and despite their minimalist palette, each of these divine spirits



Arturo Lindsay, *Ibara of Nganya*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches
(All, figure 3)



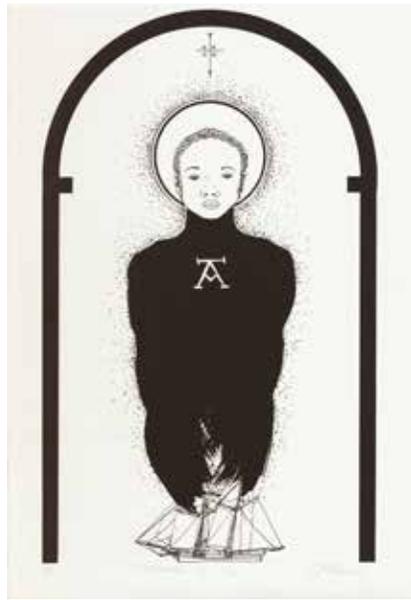
Arturo Lindsay, *Ile of Ile Ife*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



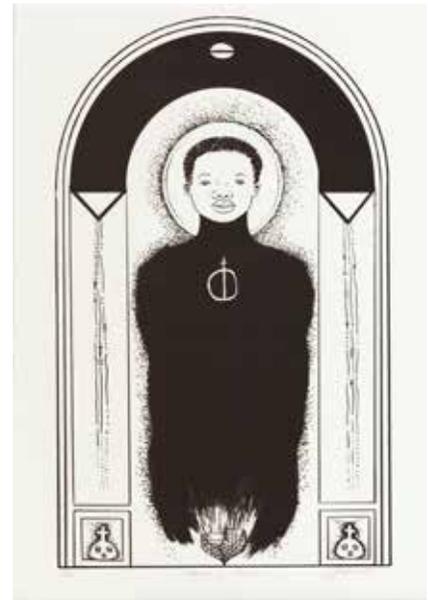
Arturo Lindsay, *Iyabo of Wamba*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



Arturo Lindsay, *Oni of Lagos*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



Arturo Lindsay, *Torkwase of Oyo*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



Arturo Lindsay, *Umar of Segou*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



Arturo Lindsay, *Kanza of Kwango*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



Arturo Lindsay, *Minkah of Kumasi*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



Arturo Lindsay, *Ye of Ejisu*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches



Arturo Lindsay, *Yejide of Iwo*, 2001, offset lithograph, 22 x 15 inches

vibrates with the power of ashé. Art historian David H. Brown argues that objects do not need to be consecrated to manifest ashé as long as they possess certain ethno-aesthetic criteria such as projecting moral principles and inspiring a devotional disposition.¹⁰ *The Children of Middle Passage* also led to a collaboration with poet Opal Moore when they researched the story of a ship that had left the West Coast of Africa with captives and disembarked in Rio de Janeiro in 1832, as he notes in the introduction to this catalog. Moore and Lindsay reimagined the loss and mourning through a collaborative performance with students from Spelman College titled *The Voyage of the Delfina* (2002).

The influence of Afro-diasporic religions, particularly the Yoruba belief in the *Orisha*—the entity created when a divine power converges with a natural force, deified ancestor, or object—is especially evident in the work of Cuban artists in the exhibition. Prints such as ***Untitled (Hands/Head)*** by **Eduardo Roca**, 1999 (figure 4) and **Ibrahim Miranda's *El Túnel***, 1999 (figure 5) reference the *ori* or physical head of a person, as well as the *ori-inu*, the internal spirit that determines their character and fate. Miranda's prints appear to mine the depths of surrealism, as was once thought of his predecessors like **Wilfredo Lam** but are in fact infused with Afro-Cuban beliefs that invoke the spirit world. Similarly, ***Mientras Más Atrás se Mire, Mas Claro Se Ve (The Farther Back You Look, the Clearer You See)*** by the renowned Cuban photographer **Pedro Abascal** honors his main orisha *Eleguá*, 2001 (figure 6). The vertical composition shows a photo-montage of an animal skeleton fused with the orisha's head over

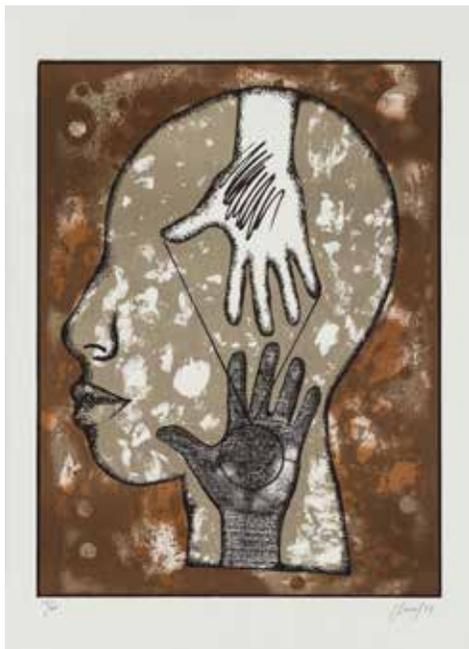


Figure 4: Eduardo Roca, *Untitled (Hands/Head)*, 2001, offset lithograph, 29 1/2 x 19 1/2 inches



Figure 5: Ibrahim Miranda, *El Túnel*, 1999, offset lithograph, 23 x 28 inches

an elongated human hand, framed by the colors of Eleguá to indicate his ownership of roads and ability to open doors for communication with other orishas. Abascal, who came to prominence during Cuba's Special Period (1991–2000), was introduced to his orisha via *La Regla de Ocha* ("The Order of Orishas," the formal name of Santería).

Among the Cuban artists, **Belkis Ayón** and **Juan Boza** made extraordinary prints that explore the all-male secret society of Abakuá. The Nigerian brotherhood of the Abakuá arrived at the port cities of Cuba through the slave trade and brought with it the establishment of fraternal societies that helped men in bondage maintain a sense of community, faith, and self-expression, and is now recognized as a religion in the island nation. Ayón began to research the history and mythology of the Abakuá while she was still in high school, and the rich iconography of its narratives became her preferred

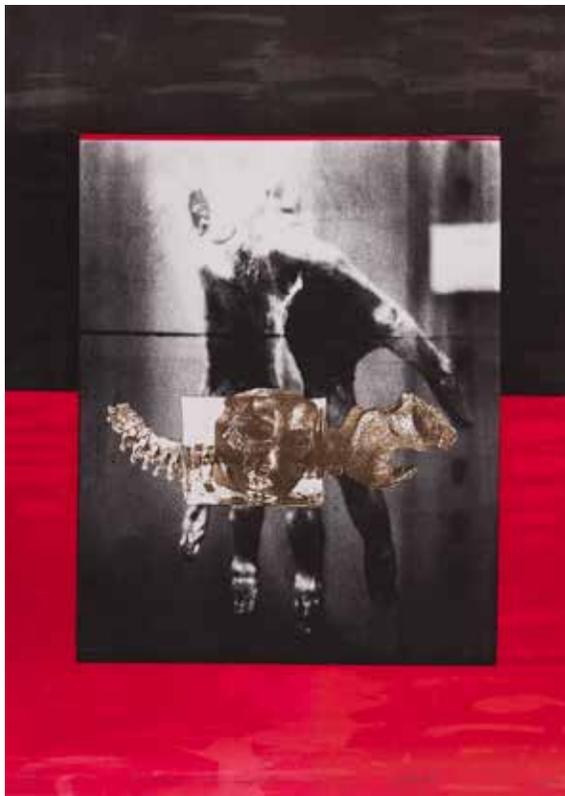


Figure 6: Pedro Abascal, *Mientras Más Atrás se Mire, Mas Claro Se Ve (The Farther Back You Look, the Clearer You See)*, 2001, offset lithograph, 30 x 22 inches



Figure 7: Belkis Ayón, *Untitled (Tres Caras) (Three Faces)*, 1999, offset lithograph, 28 x 20 inches



Figure 8: Belkis Ayón, *Untitled II*, 1999, offset lithograph, 20 x 28 inches



Figure 9: Juan Boza, *Abakuá Series 6*, 1987, collograph, 26 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop.

subject matter in printmaking. Her residency at the Brandywine Workshop in 1999, the same year of her untimely death, resulted in two offset lithographs **Untitled (Tres Caras) (Three Faces)**, and **Untitled II**, where she explored a pivotal moment in the founding myth of the Abakuá—when Princess Sikán unknowingly trapped a fish while drawing water from a river, and the sacred creature revealed its supernatural power and sound (figures 7, 8). Legend has it that after Sikán disclosed this secret to a prince from a neighboring tribe, she was sentenced to death and condemned all women to be excluded from the *ñañiga*, or Abakuá society. Borne of neither religious devotion nor hostility, Ayón reimagined the beliefs of the Abakuá from the perspective of Sikán and the excluded women, who appear without mouths in these prints, communicating only through their emotive eyes and gestures. Her mastery of visual textures and monochromatic gradations can be seen in the leopard and scale-like skin of her subjects as well as the detailed flora, fauna, and natural elements that make up the sacred iconography of this group. Ayón's posthumous retrospective *Nkame* debuted in the United States in 2016 and continues its tour to this day, introducing audiences to this enigmatic spiritual idiom.

Boza, on the other hand, examined the Abakuá religious practice from the standpoint of an artist-priest. He studied at the San Alejandro Academy in Havana with Carlos Enrique and Wilfredo Lam.¹¹ While much of his early work explored science fiction, his eventual exile through the Mariel boatlift—perhaps as a result of his sexuality—led him to New York, where he turned to a deep and rigorous exploration of Afro-Cuban spirituality.¹² In the collograph **Abakuá Series 6**, 1987, (figure 9), which he made at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in New York City, Boza referenced the form of an elegant vessel, known as a *sopera de Santo* (tureen of a saint). During colonial times, slaves used *soperas* in Cuba to hide symbols of the Orishas, which had been outlawed by their masters. Boza symbolically referenced this history with the spirit that dwells inside this vessel, whose yellow eyes peer directly at the viewer. The symmetry of his composition and vibrant color palette—pinks, reds, and yellows muddled by rough textures—invoke curiosity and adoration. Both of these artists have now joined the ancestors. Ayón was ruled a suicide—though her death remains shrouded in mystery—and Boza was a casualty of the AIDS epidemic. Their work remains just as vibrant as ever and attests to their vanguard position in this field.

Puerto Rican artist **Diógenes Ballester**, who hails from the coastal town of Ponce, where many enslaved people were brought for the cultivation of sugarcane, takes a similar approach to these artists in mining the spiritual realm to delve deeper into cultural history and the affirmation of ancestral roots. Ballester calls himself

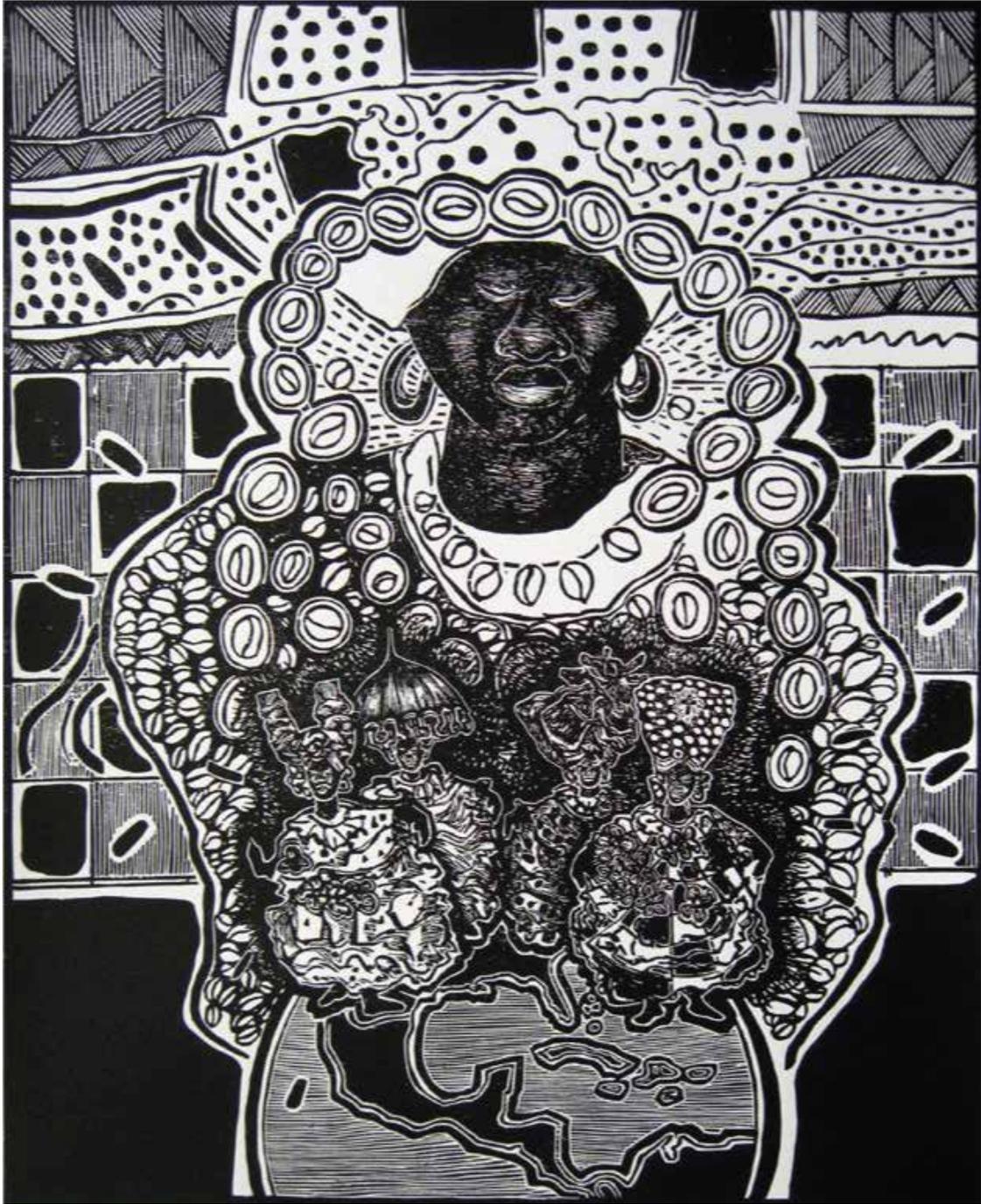


Figure 10: Diógenes Ballester, *Dance of Changó*, 2009, offset lithograph, 32 x 26 inches



Figure 11: Diógenes Ballester, *Spirit of Guanlan*, 2009, woodcut, 32 x 26 inches



Figure 12: Diógenes Ballester, *Guanlan: Global Discourse*, 2009, woodcut, 32 x 26 inches



Figure 13: Diógenes Ballester, *The Seven Powers of the Maotai*, 2009, woodcut, 32 x 26 inches



Figure 14: Diógenes Ballester, *Bonsair Paris*, 2001, screen print, 22 x 16 ½ inches. Courtesy of Coronado Studio.

an “arteologist” as he researches archival histories, archeological objects, and oral traditions in order to create his installations, paintings, and prints. This artistic process has led him to create many important series that contemplate the African and Taíno heritages of Puerto Rico. Taínos were enslaved shortly after the arrival of the Spaniards, and from 1519 until abolition in 1873 enslaved laborers were brought from Africa to the island. Yet discussions of race and slavery still create discomfort in Puerto Rico, where national policy espouses the myth of racial integration while obscuring the realities of Negrophobia and pigmentocracy.¹³ In his print, the *Dance of Changó*, 2009 (figure 10), which is among a series (figures 11, 12, 13) he made during a residency in China, a Black woman in regal dress emerges from a terrestrial globe. With her eyes closed, she appears to be remembering or conjuring the sight of women dancing as an offering to the most powerful orisha, Changó, who is known to cast thunder and lightning.

Ballester's work also attests to the movement of Caribbean and Latin American migrants to the US as entangled within the larger history of the African diaspora. In his manifesto, he speaks about creating art that addresses “fragmentation and the displacement of the emigrant, about a multicultural diaspora that is relived daily by millions of exiles, refugees and migrant workers, constantly mutating, multipolar individuals.” As a Trans-Caribbean artist, he turns toward the spiritual as a source of connection that unites the diaspora globally. In screen prints such as *Bonsoir Paris*, 2001 (figure 14), Ballester created a dreamlike market scene where an African trader holding a staff stands before a basket of chickens. In a limited palette of white, black, and gray, the vignette vibrates with intense energy as countless cowrie shells swirl about the compressed space and appear to move about the picture plane. Ballester was a Serie Project resident artist at Coronado Studio in Austin when he made this work, shortly after returning from Paris and following an exhibition of his work in Haiti.¹⁴ Once again on the move, but continuing to reference symbols that unite the diaspora, he gestured toward the cowrie shell as an important form of currency that Europeans used for buying Africans during the slave trade, but which also symbolized a spiritual connection to the orishas from the African perspective, particularly the water deity Yemaya, who rules the sea. The shell's high value would also contribute to their use in self-fashioning, as protective talismans, and in rituals of divination.

While artists like Ballester take a narrative and iconographic approach, others meditate on sonic landscapes that link their art to the spiritual traditions of Africa. Moreno Vega also documented how the Orisha tradition in New York City led to musical breakthroughs and helped introduce the rhythms of Santería, Abakuá, and Kongo music to the world.¹⁵ In fact, the renowned Palladium nightclub in Harlem hosted

some of the first public performances of orisha music in the 1950s. She notes how Cuban musicians experienced in batá drumming were often initiated and venerated the orisha Anya, owner of drums. These recent transplants to New York City brought this knowledge of sacred music and infused it into new forms of Afro-American jazz, leading to innovative genres like Cubop, and more importantly, bringing together African American and Latinx musicians like Dizzy Gillespie and Tito Puente through the polyrhythms of African philosophy.

Music and its ability to move our bodies and spirits is a topic taken up by several artists in the exhibition. The African American artist **Elizabeth Catlett-Mora**, who relocated to Mexico in 1947 and became an important member of the Taller de Gráfica Popular, used her art to challenge racial oppression in the US and Mexico. Catlett-Mora frequently returned to the theme of blues music as a form of social protest, rooted in the West African traditions of call-and-response that were brought by the enslaved.¹⁶ In *Blues*, 1983 (figure 15), she created a vertical diptych with a mottled blue-violet background, a column of three sculptural heads on the left, and two rows of couples in mid-dance. Similarly, **Candida Alvarez's** early figurative work *Los Enamorados*, 1986 (figure 16), shows a small window opening into an interior space where two couples appear to be enjoying an evening party. The viewer/voyeur peers into the warm room as a couple sways in close position; their eyes are simultaneously drawn outward to a checkered and rose-lined exterior that the Puerto Rican artist animated with dynamic linework. Jamaican-born artist **Keith Morrison** extends this interest to the African roots of *Black Mardi Gras in New Orleans and the Argentine tango* (figures 17, 2). Music pulsates through his wildly colorful prints, which appear to capture dancers and mythical creatures in motion. Moreover, Dominican-American New York artist **Moses Ros-Suárez's** etching *El Reggaetón del Bachatero*, 2010 (figure 19), shows a dancing figure that bridges the divides between his beloved island and bustling city through the sounds of bachata and reggaetón. In these prints, artists invoke the African origins of this New World music, the way music could carry lament or public outcry, as well as the nurturing of Black joy.

Opera is perhaps the most spectacular of these forms combining music, song, and dramatic acting. In the spring of 2021, the Bronx-born and-based Afro-Dominican artist **Yelaine Rodriguez** went to the Dominican Republic to film *Ebbó*, an opera-film that involved a collaboration with Cuban composer **Louis Aguirre** and librettist **Rafael Almanza**. Commissioned by the Americas Society, *Ebbó* recounts an African legend in which Queen Apetebí refuses to sacrifice (*ebbó* or *ebó*) her beautiful bird and is condemned to death for her disobedience. Rodriguez, who studied fashion design at Parsons, designed the dazzling costumes and worked with choreographers to film the dancers onsite in the ruins of colonial

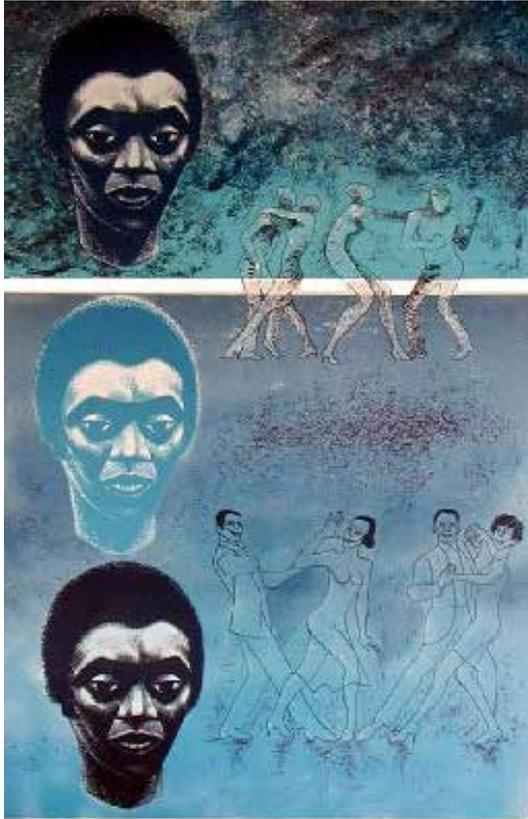


Figure 15: Elizabeth Catlett, *Blues*, 1983, offset lithograph, 28 x 19 1/2 inches

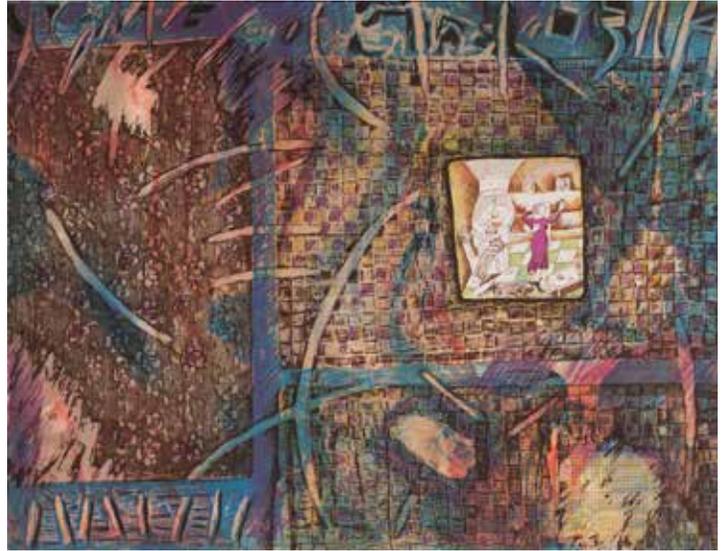


Figure 16: Candida Alvarez, *Los Enamorados*, 1986, offset lithograph, 21 1/2 x 30 inches



Figure 17: Keith Morrison, *Dance in America/Mardi Gras*, 1985, offset lithograph, 22 x 30 inches



Figure 18: Keith Morrison, *Wild Kingdom*, 2011, offset lithograph, 37 x 25 inches



Figure 19: Moses Ros-Suárez, *El Reggaetón del Bachatero*, 2010, etching, aquatint, chine collé, image size 7 x 9 inches. Courtesy of the artist and the Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA.



Figure 20: Yelaine Rodriguez, *Ebbó: The Embrace*, 2021, photopolymer, chine collé, image size 8 x 10 inches



Figure 21: Juan Sánchez, *Prayer and Struggle*, 1990, offset lithograph, 21 ½ x 30 inches



Figure 22: Luanda Lozano, *Sálvame Santo*, 2010, etching, chine collé, image size 7 x 9 inches. Courtesy of the artist and the Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA.

buildings on the shores of the Dominican Republic. Aguirre called the visual and dramatic spectacle an “exorcism of the island.”¹⁷ Her etching **Ebbó: The Embrace**, 2021 (figure 20), is drawn from a film still and documents her recent collaboration with master printer Pepe Coronado in Austin.

These forays into Black sonic landscapes, which highlight the work of African American and Latinx artists, speak to the shared ideals of Pan-Africanism and Black consciousness that Arturo Lindsay highlights in his essay “Dancing Aché with the Orishas in My Life and in My Work.” The Cuban and Puerto Rican communities and their preservation of the orisha tradition brought the African spiritual dimension to the Black Power Movement of the 1960s and '70s, lending its rich iconography, music, and dress.¹⁸ African Americans did not understand why these Latinx communities continued to reference images of white Catholic saints. This was a point of contention that reflected a lack of understanding of their syncretic value, meaning that a Yoruba deity like Changó could also be venerated through the image of Santa Barbara and that the Holy Child of Atocha referenced the powerful orisha Eleguá. Furthermore, recent scholarship has shown that many of the enslaved came from the Kingdom of Kongo, which converted to Catholicism as early as 1500, prior to the slave trade.¹⁹ These Kongo Christians adopted European saints as their own without it being a colonial imposition and brought these spiritual beliefs to the Americas. This historical evidence suggests that Christian iconography would take on multivalent meanings for African descendent artists from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Some of the prints in the exhibition signal how Christianity is an important source for the Afro-Latinx diaspora. The Nuyorican artist **Juan Sánchez** frequently turned to family, politics, and religion in his art. In his signature collage-like style, the offset lithograph **Prayer and Struggle**, 1990 (figure 21), shows a mother's handwritten prayer pleading for the safety of her son framed by scrapbook cutouts of children in the Puerto Rican Day Parade, a xerox of Ramón Frade's *El Pan Nuestro* with a *jíbaro* (subsistence farmer) carrying plantains, and an upside-down bald eagle. Sánchez arranged these items against a vibrant golden and vermillion background where the pattern of Sacred Heart imagery speaks to the struggles of poverty, displacement, and unfreedom. Critic Lucy Lippard noted, “Confronting the fragmentation of his culture by imperialism and dispersion, Sánchez lovingly weaves his fragments into a new fabric that is both spiritually restorative and politically radical.”²⁰ Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA artist **Luanda Lozano**, who was born in Angola to Dominican immigrants, also turns toward Catholic iconography in her graphic work. Lozano's etching **Sálvame Santo**, 2010 (figure 22), published at the Blackburn Workshop and Manhattan Graphics, outlines the figure of a Catholic saint amidst the blue-green waters of the Caribbean

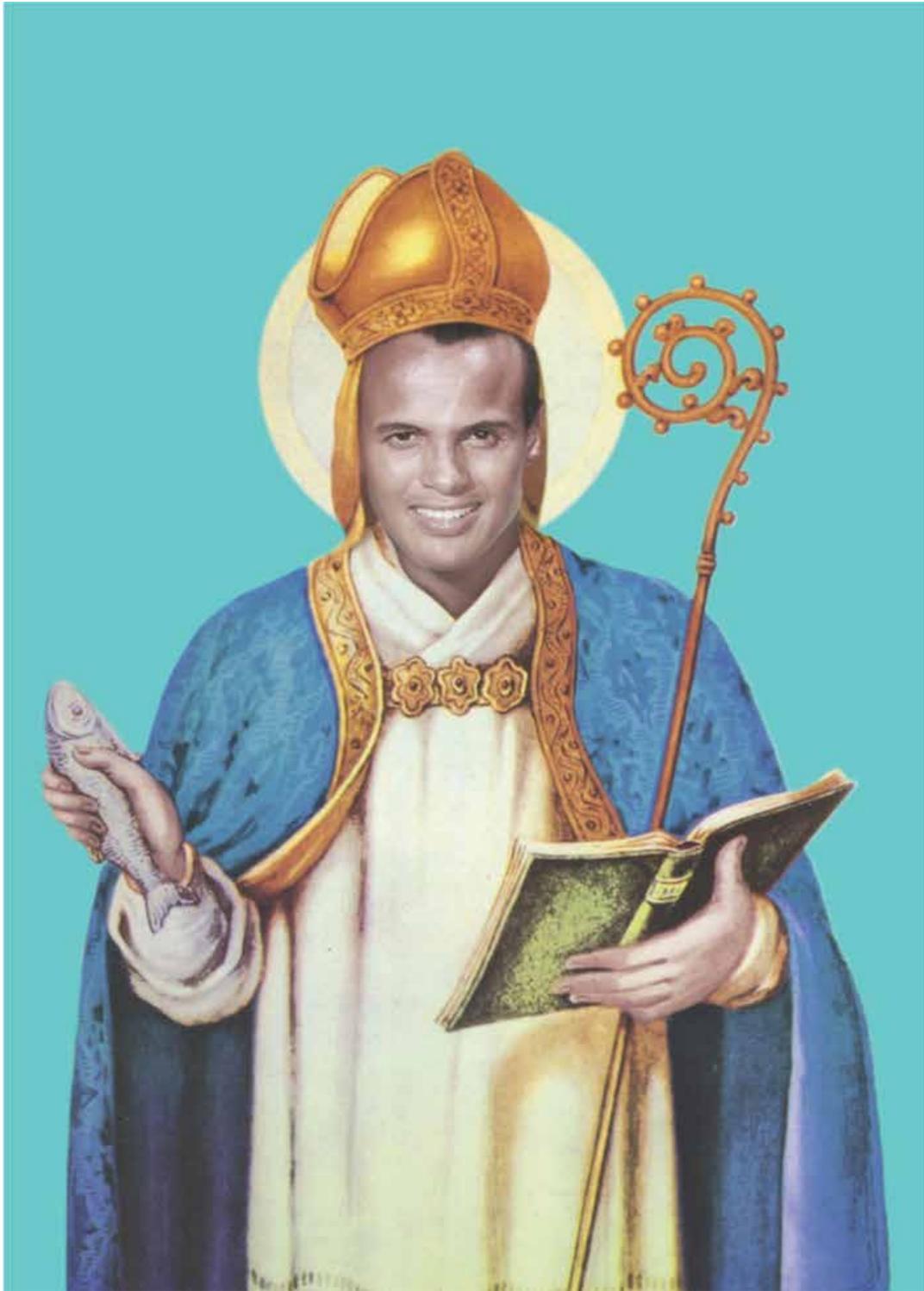
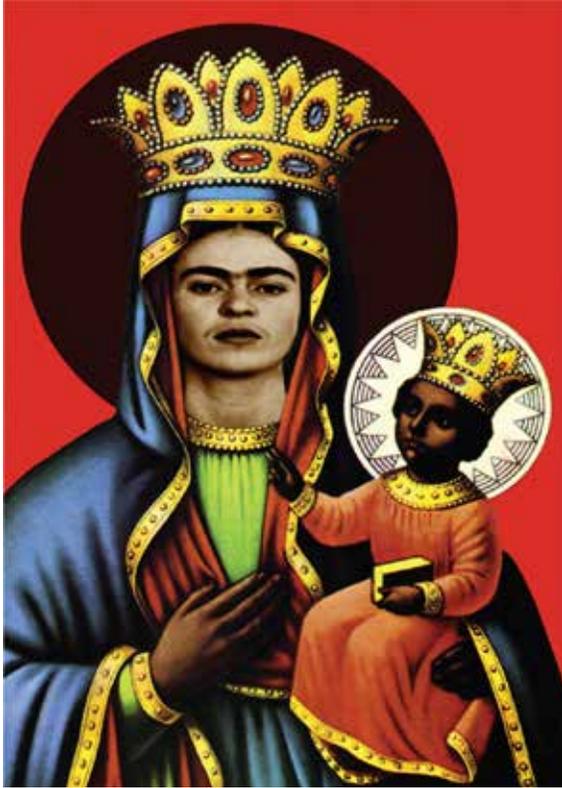


Figure 23: Vladimir Cybil Charlier, *Agwe Belafonte* (*Pantéon* series), 2018, digital print on archival paper, 24 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Coronado printstudio.



Vladimir Cybil Charlier, *Frida Dantó* (*Pantéon* series), 2018, digital print on archival paper, 24 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Coronado printstudio.



Vladimir Cybil Charlier, *Billie Zullie* (*Pantéon* series), 2018, digital print on archival paper, 24 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Coronado printstudio.



Figure 24: Scherezade Garcia, *Chameleon 1492*, 2012, screen print, 30 x 22 inches. Courtesy of Coronado Studio.

Sea. The Catholic icon sustains the prayers of an ongoing tragedy of shipwrecks that happen along the 90-mile stretch between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico's coastline when the small wooden boats called *yolas* carrying dozens of passengers are lost at sea.

The New York-born Haitian artist **Vladimir Cybil Charlier** and Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA artist **Scherezade García**, on the other hand, take a conceptual approach to their appropriation of Catholic imagery. Their work often inverts symbols and signs in order to shift the power differential between the postcolonial reality of the Antilles and its former colonizers in Europe. Charlier's series ***Pantéon*** recasts popular culture icons and famous artists as part of the Vodou pantheon with each title referencing an *loa* (or *Iwa*) deity (figure 23). She digitally manipulates the portraits of famous figures into the mass-produced images of Catholic saints to reference how African spiritual practices had to be hidden in the form of a decoy to not arouse suspicion. García's formal investigations into the neo-baroque, as observed in ***Chameleon 1492***, 2012 (figure 24), brandish Catholic representational strategies to frame her cinnamon-colored angels, which speak of the dominant racial mixtures of African and European ancestry—or *mulataje*—in her native Santo Domingo.²¹

The regime of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (active from 1930 until his assassination in 1961) manipulated the Dominican concept of race and "gave currency to the term indio (Indian) to describe the complexion of people of mixed ancestry."²² Construed in opposition to Haiti's Black national identity, the use of *Indian* as a racial category willfully eroded the presence of Afro-Dominicans through its systematic use in government documents. **Miguel Luciano's** print ***Detrás de la Oreja (Behind the Ears)***, 2010 (figure 1), alludes to this incongruence and to "Black behind the ears," a colloquial expression overheard in Dominican households. The phrase is an admission that although most Dominicans see themselves as racially Indian, and culturally Hispanic, they are undoubtedly tied to African ancestry. In the photo stencil, Luciano inserts color gradations across his face. The opposite page contains a map of the Dominican Republic, and where one would normally see a stamp of entry or exit, he adds a triangular rubber stamp addressing the colorism of Trujillo's invented racial categories *indio claro* and *indio oscuro* ("light Indian" and "dark Indian," respectively). The experience of exile and migration to the US has enabled many artists like Luciano to question these forms of racial oppression and embrace the many facets of their ancestry.

The final section of the exhibition highlights the connections between nature and spirituality. The Martinican writers Aimé Césaire and Suzanne Césaire wrote at length about how Black Caribbeans are politically and spiritually connected to the land, and

their work as part of the *négritude* movement—an anticolonial literary movement that promoted Black culture and history—influenced many artists such as Wilfredo Lam, who began to envision the tropical landscape as critical to a Black modernity and as a site of self-determination for African descendants in the Americas.²³ This spiritual connection to nature is evident in the work of Dominican artist **Julio Valdez**. The artist relocated to the United States permanently in 1993 when he received a fellowship to work at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in New York City. During this time, he adopted the silhouette as a way to reflect on his shifting identity as a recent transplant.²⁴ A residency invitation to the Brandywine Workshop resulted in ***Building Myself***, 1996 (figure 25), a painterly offset lithograph where his body emerges out of plant-like and water forms. The human form consists of a series of vertical blue and green strokes with a Taíno petroglyph at the center and a crescent moon that marks the subject's head. The artist outlined the silhouette in a bright white suggesting the figure emerges from a reflective surface, which contains not only water but also tropical leaves that frame the body. The act of surrendering to nature or seeing oneself as inseparable from the Antillean terrain recalls Suzanne Césaire's notion of the "plant-man," when she wrote: "Like the plant, he abandons himself to the rhythm of universal life. He makes no effort to dominate nature...I'm not saying that he makes the plants grow; I'm saying that he grows, that he lives like a plant."²⁵ The rootedness in the terrain of the Caribbean islands and waters that Césaire advocated was meant to empower Afro-diasporic subjects to counter the disenfranchised positions brought on by slavery and colonialism, and restore a balance to the tropics through stewardship, reclamation, and opposition to extractive economies. Similarly, Keith Morrison invokes a return to the primordial landscape of the tropics in his print ***Wild Kingdom***, 2011 (figure 18), where a prostrate human figure and friendly animal gaze over a cliff at a majestic waterfall while being surrounded by larger-than-life orchid flowers.

The work of Puerto Rican printmaker **Lizette Lugo** likewise enacts this spiritual connection between the female body and the Caribbean landscape. In her print ***Casa de Muñecas***, 2002 (figure 26), the figure of a woman emerges from gold and verdant palm leaves. The background of the print is a patchwork of stringed dolls, one of which stands out for its size and gingham dress: a black doll known as *la madama* that alludes to Puerto Rico's African heritage. While handmade black dolls of 19th century Americana often referenced the racial stereotype of the mammy, the figure of *la madama* expresses religious and matriarchal power in Afro-Caribbean communities, particularly those who practice Santería and Espiritismo—the belief in ancestor spirits. At the center of the composition, Lugo disrobed *la madama* and made her in the shape of a house or home to signify her role as shelter, nurturer, and guardian.



Figure 25: Julio Valdez, *Building Myself*, 1996, offset lithograph, 30 x 21 ½ inches



Figure 26: Lizette Lugo, *Casa de Muñecas*, 2002, screen print, 22 x 16 inches. Courtesy of Coronado Studio.



Figure 27: Celea Guevara, *Love*, 2019, linocut, 30 ¼ x 22 ¾ inches. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 28: Celea Guevara, *Faith*, 2019, linocut, 30 ¼ x 22 ¾ inches. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 29: Celea Guevara, *Peace*, 2019, linocut, 30 ¼ x 22 ¾ inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Similarly, the Afro-Honduran artist **Celea Guevara** looks at the matriarchal figures who carry on the traditional and spiritual beliefs of her Garifuna heritage. In the late-18th century, British colonists forcibly exiled the Garifuna, a community of mixed-race African and Carib-Arawak Indians, who were resisting enslavement and assimilation on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent. Despite their traumatic displacement to the northeastern shores of Honduras, Garifuna culture flourished along Central America's Caribbean coastline. In 2001, UNESCO declared their language, dance, and music as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Guevara began her artistic training at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes in Tegucigalpa, where she recalls being the only person of African descent among 200 students, an experience that left her determined to make visible the beauty and resilience of Garifuna people.²⁶ The exhibition includes three of her linocut prints—**Love, Faith, and Peace**, all 2019 (figure 27, 28, 29)—made using a technique she developed studying under the Ghanaian printmaker Esther Delaquis-Baidoo. Each print centers a Garifuna woman who is carrying on traditional foodways with staples such as fish, plantain, and ground coconut. Guevara's prints are likewise attentive to the natural environment of the Atlantic coast, and how Garifuna artisanal practices sustain life, guided by their stewardship and reclamation of the land. Her work demonstrates that Garifuna women have, for centuries, enacted Césaire's desire for a rootedness that would lead to empowerment. Africana studies scholar Paul Joseph Lopez Oro reiterates that Garifuna claims of Afro-Indigeneity rest on a “political subjectivity...tied to land rights and cultural heritage.”²⁷

This exhibition joins a cadre of scholars calling for, “The insurgence of Afro-Latinx Studies...an intellectual and political response to the erasure and negation,” that Black Latinxs have experienced as a result of the instrumentalization of *mestizaje* in Latinx communities.²⁸ But rather than focus on the violence, negation, and disenfranchisement, it showcases the powerful ways in which artists have kept alive the ancestral knowledge of Africa, and embedded it so deeply across the Americas that it is indivisible from our hemispheric history. Their prints' allusions to Santería and the Orisha pantheon, Christian iconography, music, and nature make manifest the ways in which the ancestors remain present. The reproductive medium of printmaking summons the ancestors as their multiples spread out through networks of collectors and museums beckoning viewers for a connection to *la herencia* (the inheritance) and an acknowledgment that the art of the African diaspora supersedes the fraught categories of American, African American, Latin American, and Latinx art. The spiritual in Afro-Latinx art is here to challenge those subtle and overt denials of Black sovereignty, to account for the inextricable ties that bind Africa to her descendants in the Americas, and to open pathways for mutual recognition.

The author would like to thank Joseph Hartman, Kimberli Gant, and Yelaine Rodriguez for their insightful feedback on this essay. Much gratitude is also due to Kendra Lyimo who served as curatorial research assistant for this exhibition.

Endnotes

- 1 The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database spearheaded by historians David Eltis and David Richardson can be accessed by visiting slavevoyages.org. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Black in Latin America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 2.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores, ed. *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1–3.
- 4 The prefix *Afro* carries symbolic power as an affirmative for the many artists who embrace their African descent. However, it can also be used to separate Afro-descendants from the body politics of the nation-state. I use *Afro-Latinx* as outlined by sociologist Agustín Laó-Montes, a category that “could reveal and recognize hidden histories and subaltern knowledge, while unsettling and challenging dominant (essentialist, nationalist, imperial, patriarchal) notions of African-ness, American-ness, and Latinidad, along with the forms of power/knowledge that are embedded in these categories.” Agustín Laó-Montes, “Afro-Latinidades and the Diasporic Imaginary,” *Iberoamericana* V, 17 (2005): 117–130.
- 5 Yelaine Rodriguez, “Exhibition Description,” in *Afro Syncretic* (New York: The Latinx Project at NYU, 2019), n.p. The artists featured in *Afro Syncretic* were Elia Alba, Tiffany Alfonseca, David Antonio Cruz, Patricia Encarnación, Lucia Hierro, Fabiola Jean-Louis, Carlos Martiel, Joiri Minaya, and Melissa Mislá.
- 6 Gates, 30.
- 7 Flavia dos Santos Gomes, “The Legacy of Slavery and Social Relations in Brazil,” in *Facing Up to the Past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe*, ed. Gert Oostindie, 75–82 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 8 Marta Moreno Vega, “The Ancestral Sacred Creative Impulse of Africa and the African Diaspora: Àse, the Nexus of the Black Global Aesthetic,” *Lennox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry* 5 (1999): 45–57. The word *ashé*, from the Yoruba *àṣẹ*, is also written as *aché* in Spanish.

- 9 Marta Moreno Vega, "Espiritismo in the Puerto Rican Community: A New World Recreation with the Elements of Kongo Ancestor Worship," *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 3 (January 1999): 325–353.
- 10 David H. Brown, "Toward an Ethnoaesthetics of Santería Arts: The Practice of Altar-making and Gift Exchange," in *Santería Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Art*, ed. Arturo Lindsay (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 80.
- 11 Randall Morris, ed. "Juan Boza: Interview with Ricardo Viera," in *Santería Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Art*, ed. Arturo Lindsay (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 179.
- 12 Ibid, 182.
- 13 Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 261; Lowell Fiet, "Puerto Rico, Slavery, Race: Faded Memories, Erased Histories," in *Facing Up to the Past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe*, ed. Gert Oostindie, 70–4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Edward Telles, *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).
- 14 The print *Bonsoir Paris* (2001) was inspired by his Port-au-Prince installation *Globalization, Post-Industrialism, and Syncretism* (1999) that consisted of large-scale charcoal drawings with encaustic connected to a mound of charcoal in the gallery space. Diógenes Ballester, phone conversation with the author, June 2, 2021.
- 15 Marta Moreno Vega, "The Yoruba Orisha Tradition Comes to New York City," in *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States*, ed. Juan Flores and Miriam Jiménez Román (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 245–51.
- 16 Klare Scarborough, "Elizabeth Catlett: Singing the Blues," *The International Review of African American Art* 25, no. 4 (2015): 50–65.
- 17 To see the film and hear a short interview with Aguirre and Rodriguez visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpHvk4_-H_8
- 18 Moreno Vega, "The Yoruba Orisha Tradition Comes to New York City," 249.

- 19 Cécile Fromont, ed. *Afro-Catholic Festivals in the Americas: Performance, Representation, and the Making of a Black Atlantic Tradition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 3.
- 20 Lucy R. Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*, Second Edition (New York: The New Press, 2000), 135.
- 21 Abigail Lapin Dardashti, "El Dorado: The Neo-Baroque in Dominican American Art," *Diálogo* 20, no. 1 (2017), 73–87.
- 22 Silvio Torres-Saillant, "The Tribulations of Blackness: Stages in Dominican Racial Identity," *Latin American Perspectives* 25, no. 3 (1998): 126–46.
- 23 Samantha Noel, *Tropical Aesthetics of Black Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 60–8.
- 24 Sandra D. Jackson, *Julio Valdez: Raíz de Sueños* (Santo Domingo: Museo de las Casas Reales, 2001), np.
- 25 Suzanne Césaire, "A Civilization's Discourse," in *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean*, ed. by Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (New York: Verso, 1996), 97-99.
- 26 Celea Guevara speaking at an artist panel for the 2020 exhibition *Connected Diaspora: Central American Visuality in the Age of Social Media*, curated by Veronica Melendez at Stamp Gallery, University of Maryland, https://youtu.be/djgQ_T8HkL0.
- 27 Paul Joseph López Oro, "Garifunizando Ambas Americas: Hemispheric Entanglements of Blackness/Indigeneity/AfroLatinidad," *Postmodern Culture* 31, no. 1 (2020) doi:10.1353/pmc.2020.0025.
- 28 Ibid. For more on the violence of mestizaje and artist calls to cancel the Eurocentric conceptions of latinidad, see Tatiana Flores, "Latinidad is Cancelled: Confronting an Anti-Black Construct," *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture* Vol. 3, no. 3 (2021): 58–79.

Checklist

Pedro Abascal

*Mientras Mas Atras se Mire,
Mas Claro Se Ve (The Farther Back You
Look, the Clearer You See)*, 2001
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper size: 30" x 22"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Candida Alvarez

Los Enamorados, 1986
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper size: 21 ½" x 30"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Belkis Ayón

Untitled II, 1999
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper size: 28" x 20"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Belkis Ayón

Untitled (Tres Caras), 1999
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper size: 28" x 20"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Diógenes Ballester

Bonsoir Paris, 2001
Silkscreen
Image/Paper size: 22" x 16 ¼"
Printed at Coronado Studio and The Serie Project

Diógenes Ballester

Guanlan: Global Discourse, 2009
Woodcut
Image/Paper size: 32" x 26"
Printed at Guanlan Print Base Industry, China

Diógenes Ballester

Spirit of Guanlan, 2009
Woodcut
Image/Paper size: 32" x 26"
Printed at Guanlan Print Base Industry, China

Diógenes Ballester

The Dance of Changó, 2009
Woodcut
Image/Paper size: 32" x 26"
Printed at Guanlan Print Base Industry, China

Diógenes Ballester

The Seven Powers of the Maotai, 2009
Woodcut
Image/Paper size: 32" x 26"
Printed at Guanlan Print Base Industry, China

Juan Boza

Abakuá Series 6, 2011
Collagraph
Image/Paper size: 26" x 27"
Printed at Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop

Elizabeth Catlett-Mora

Blues, 1983
Offset lithograph
Image Size: 27 ½" x 17 ¾"
Paper Size: 28" x 19 ½"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Vladimir Cybil Charlier

Agwe Belafonte (from Pantéon series), 2018
Digital print on archival paper
Image/Paper Size: 24" x 36"
Printed at Coronado printstudio

Vladimir Cybil Charlier

Billie Zullie (from Pantéon series), 2018
Digital print on archival paper
Image/Paper Size: 24" x 36"
Printed at Coronado printstudio

Vladimir Cybil Charlier

Frida Dantó (from Pantéon series), 2018
Digital print on archival paper
Image/Paper Size: 24" x 36"
Printed at Coronado printstudio



Celea Guevara

Faith, 2019
 Linocut
 Image/Paper Size: 24" x 18"
 Printed at Houston Baptist University

Celea Guevara

Love, 2019
 Linocut
 Image/Paper Size: 24" x 18"
 Printed at Houston Baptist University

Celea Guevara

Peace, 2019
 Linocut
 Image/Paper Size: 24" x 18"
 Printed at Houston Baptist University

Vladimir Cybil Charlier

Marassa Andy and Basquiat
 (from *Pantéon series*), 2018
 Digital print on archival paper
 Image/Paper Size: 24" x 36"
 Printed at Coronado printstudio

Scherezade Garcia

Chameleon 1492, 2012
 Silk screen
 Image/Paper Size: 30" x 22"
 Printed at Coronado Studio and
 The Serie Project



Arturo Lindsay

Ibara of Nganya (from *Children of Middle Passage series*), 2001
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Ile of Ile Ife (from *Children of Middle Passage series*), 2001
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Iyabo of Wamba (from *Children of Middle Passage series*), 2001
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Scherezade Garcia

Soñando Despierta (Day Dreaming),
 2010, Archival inkjet and silk screen
 Image/Paper Size: 9" x 7"
 Printed at Coronado printstudio

Arturo Lindsay

Kanza of Kwango (from *Children of Middle Passage series*), 2001
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Minkah of Kumasi (from Children of Middle Passage series), 2001
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Oni of Lagos (from Children of Middle Passage series), 2001
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Torkwase of Oyo (from Children of Middle Passage series), 2001
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Umar of Segou (from Children of Middle Passage series), 2001
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Ye of Ejisu (from Children of Middle Passage series), 2001
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Arturo Lindsay

Yejide of Iwo (from Children of Middle Passage series), 2001
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 22" x 15"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Luanda Lozano

Sálvame Santo, 2010
Etching and chine-collé
Image Size: 7" x 9" and Paper Size: 11" x 15"
Printed at Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA

Miguel Luciano

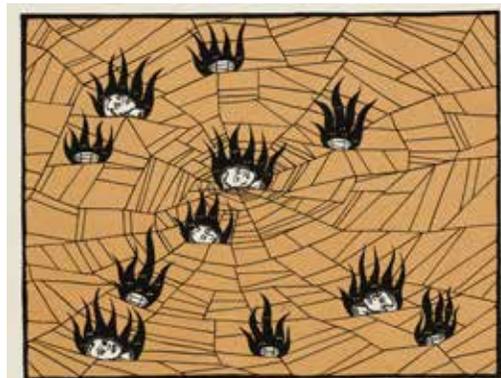
Detrás de la Oreja (Behind the Ears), 2010
Silkscreen and rubber stamp
Image Size: 7" x 9"
Paper Size: 11" x 15"
Printed at Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA

Lizette Lugo

Casas de Muñecas, 2002
Silkscreen
Image/Paper Size: 22" x 16"
Printed at Coronado Studio and The Serie Project

Ibrahim Miranda

El Tunel, 1999
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 23" x 28"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives



Ibrahim Miranda

Filadelphia, 1999
Offset lithograph
Image/Paper Size: 21 1/2" x 30"
Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives



Keith Morrison

Dance in America/Mardi Gras, 1985
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 22 ¼" x 30"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Keith Morrison

El Dorado, 2002
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 21" x 13 ¾"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Keith Morrison

The Tango, 2012
 Offset lithograph
 Image Size: 21" x 15"
 Paper Size: 22" x 16 ½"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Keith Morrison

Wild Kingdom, 2011
 Offset lithograph
 Image Size: 35" x 23"
 Paper Size: 38" x 25"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Eduardo Roca

Untitled (Hands/Head), 1999
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 29 ½" x 19 ½"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Yelaine Rodriguez

Ebbó: The Embrace, 2021
 Photopolymer and chine-collé
 Image/Paper Size: 8" x 10"
 Printed at Coronado printsudio

Moses Ros-Suárez

El Reggaetón del Bachatero, 2010
 Etching, aquatint, and chine-collé
 Image Size: 7" x 9"
 Paper Size: 11" x 15"
 Printed at Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA

Juan Sánchez

Prayer and Struggle, 1990
 Offset lithograph and silkscreen
 Image/Paper Size: 21 ½" x 30"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives



Juan Sánchez

Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, 1994
 Offset lithograph and silkscreen
 Image/Paper Size: 21 ½" x 30"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Julio Valdez

Building Myself, 1996
 Offset lithograph
 Image/Paper Size: 30" x 21 ½"
 Printed at Brandywine Workshop and Archives

Artists' Biographies

Pedro Abascal

Cuban, born 1960

Artist and self-taught photographer Pedro Abascal was born in Havana, Cuba. In addition to being a visual-artist, he has worked as a photojournalist, commercial photographer, and photographer for film. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions in various countries and solo exhibitions in Cuba, Switzerland, and the United States. His work has been published in various anthologies, including *Canto a la Realidad: Antología de la Fotografía Latinoamericana, 1860–1993*, and *100 Años de Fotografía Cubana*.

Candida Alvarez

American/Puerto Rican, born 1955

Candida Alvarez was born in Brooklyn, New York City. She is a tenured professor of painting and drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she has taught since 1998. Her works are included in public collections including the Art Institute of Chicago and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. She is the 2021 recipient of the Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting and the 2019 Joan Mitchell Foundation fellowship.

Belkis Ayón

Cuban, 1967–1999

Belkis Ayón was a highly acclaimed Cuban artist-printmaker and is considered a master of the collagraph print. Her work was based on the Afro-Cuban religion Abakuá, combining the myth of Sikan and the traditions of the all-male secret society. She was considered a pioneer among printmakers for her richly colored and monochromatic collagraphs of dark silhouettes and ghostly white figures. In Havana, she studied printmaking at the San Alejandro Academy of Fine Arts and became an important member of the Taller Experimental de Gráfica. Ayón's work has been shown and collected internationally, including in group exhibitions in Canada, South Korea, the Netherlands, and Spain. In 1993 she exhibited at the Venice Biennale and won the international prize at the International Graphics Biennale in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Ayón had residencies at Temple University's Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Philadelphia; Philadelphia College of Art (now University of the Arts); Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; and at the Brandywine Workshop and Archives, Philadelphia. Her work is in public collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York City.

Diógenes Ballester

Puerto Rican/American, born 1956

Diógenes Ballester is a visual artist, educator, and writer. He received an MFA from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and a BFA from Catholic University of Puerto Rico. He has taught art at The Cooper Union, New York City; State University of New York, New Paltz; College of New Rochelle,

NY; and State University of New York, Albany. His work has been exhibited widely in the United States, Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. He was named Guest of Honor at the Guanlan International Print Biennial, China, 2009; and received other honors including the award "Best Exhibition of the Year in Contemporary Media" at the International Association of Critics of Art, 2007; Individual Artist Grant, New York State Council for the Arts, 2006; Artist-in Residence, Alfonso Arana Foundation Award, Paris, France, 1999–2000; Honorable Award in Drawing Category, Tenth International Biennial of Print and Drawing Exhibition, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan, 2001; and Gold Medal Winner, Painting, Third Caribbean and Central America Biennial of Painting, Museum of Modern Art, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1996. His work is in public collections including El Museo del Barrio, New York City; National Museum in Krakow, Poland; Casa de las Americas, Havana, Cuba; and Museum of Modern Art, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Juan Boza

Cuban, 1941–1991

Juan Boza was a gay Afro-Cuban artist who studied at the San Alejandro Academy of Fine Arts, Havana. He was an active member of Havana's Taller Experimental de Gráfica. He excelled at painting, drawing, engraving, installation, and graphic design. After arriving in New York in 1980, he worked at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, the Lower Eastside Printshop, and the Art Students League. He participated in many shows in Cuba and the United States, as well as in Europe and Latin America. He was the recipient of the Jerome Foundation Fellowship to the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. He was one of the artists featured in Wayne Salazar's 1985 documentary *Cuba-USA: Three Cuban Artists* in New York City. His work was included in the *Outside Cuba* exhibition and the *Cuba-USA: The First Generation* traveling exhibition. His work is in the collections of the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Museo de la Universidad Autónoma de México, Mexico City, among others.

Elizabeth Catlett-Mora

American/Mexican, 1915–2012

Elizabeth Catlett-Mora was a printmaker, sculptor, and activist. She graduated from Howard University, Washington, DC; received an MFA in sculpting from University of Iowa, Iowa City; studied ceramics at the Art Institute of Chicago; and lithography at the Art Students League, New York City. Her work centers around themes of African American culture, the female form and experience, and shedding light on oppressed communities. Catlett-Mora taught at Dillard University, New Orleans, LA; Hampton Institute (now Hampton University), VA; and the George Washington Carver People's School in Harlem, New York City, among other institutions. In 1946, she relocated to Mexico, and eventually became a Mexican citizen. In Mexico City, she was an important member of the Taller de Gráfica Popular and the first female professor in sculpture at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Her work is in public collections including the Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; and Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Vladimir Cybil Charlier

Haitian/American, born 1967

Born in New York City to Haitian parents, Vladimir Cybil Charlier attended school in Haiti and spent her summers in New York, a “reverse immigration” that continues to inform her practice. She earned an MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York City, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Madison, ME. She was an artist in residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York City. Charlier has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues including Pérez Art Museum Miami; Grand Palais, Paris; Bienal del Caribe, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Cuenca Biennial, Ecuador; Panama Biennial, Panama City; and the 2006 Venice Biennale.

Scherezade García

Dominican/American, born 1966

Scherezade García is an interdisciplinary visual artist born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and based in New York City. She holds an AAS from Altos de Chavón School of Design, La Romana, Dominican Republic; a BFA from Parsons/The New School, New York City; and an MFA from the City College of New York. In 2010, she cofounded the collective Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA. She is the recipient of a 2015 Joan Mitchell Foundation grant. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; El Museo del Barrio, New York City; Housatonic Museum of Art, Bridgeport, CT; and Museo de Arte Moderno, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She recently joined the studio art faculty at the University of Texas, Austin.

Celea Guevara

Honduran/American, born ca. 1981

Celea Guevara is a Garífuna artist, born in Santa Rosa de Aguan, Colón, Honduras. She began her art education at the National School of Fine Arts, Tegucigalpa, and migrated to Houston in 2006. She holds a BFA from the University of Houston and an MFA from Houston Baptist University.

Arturo Lindsay, DArts

Panamanian/American, born 1946

Dr. Arturo Lindsay is professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Art and Art History at Spelman College in Atlanta. His work builds on his research in African spiritual and aesthetic traditions in the Americas. He earned a Doctor of Arts degree from New York University, New York City; an MFA in painting from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and a BA from Central Connecticut State College, New Britain. He was the 2006 Distinguished Batza Family Chair at Colgate University, Hamilton, NY, and in 2005 he was named the Kemp Distinguished Visiting Professor at Davidson College, NC. In 1999 Lindsay served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the University of Panama, Panama City.

Luanda Lozano

Dominican/American, born 1973

Luanda Lozano was born in Humpata, Angola. In New York City, she earned a BFA in illustration at Parsons School of Design/The New School and developed her love for prints at the Robert

Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, working with the Peruvian artist Claudio Juarez. In 2010, she cofounded the Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA. Her work is in public collections including Kanagawa Museum Print Collection, Japan; Museo Nacional del Grabado, Argentina; Varna Museum, Bulgaria; Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey; Library of Congress and Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung; and Florean Museum, Maramures, Romania.

Miguel Luciano

Dominican/American, born 1968

Miguel Luciano was born in the Dominican Republic and has worked in New York City since 1994. Luciano attended the Escuela Nacional de Artes Visuales and Universidad Autónoma, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Altos de Chavón School of Design, La Romana, Dominican Republic; and the Parsons School of Design/The New School, New York City. Luciano uses painting to explore lyrical abstraction and involve the community through public artworks. His work has been shown in group exhibitions nationally and internationally. In 2010, he cofounded the Dominican York Proyecto GRÁFICA. His works are in public collections including the Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, NH, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.

Lizette Lugo

Puerto Rican, born 1956

Lizette Lugo was born in Dorado, Puerto Rico, and graduated from the University of the Sacred Heart, Santurce, Puerto Rico. She works primarily in the serigraphy technique and is influenced by the printmaking movements and traditions of Puerto Rico, naive art, and Latin American surrealism. Her works are in public collections including the Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico; La Salle University Art Museum, Philadelphia; and Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin.

Ibrahim Miranda

Cuban, born 1969

Painter and printmaker Ibrahim Miranda was born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. He attended the Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana. His works are in public collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Havana; Museum of Modern Art, New York City; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and other national and international institutions. Miranda exhibited in the Boston Printmakers Biennial in 2013. He lives and works in Havana.

Keith Morrison

Jamaican/American, born 1942

Artist, art professor, curator, writer, and administrator Keith Anthony Morrison was born in Jamaica. Morrison studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he received a BFA and MFA. He represented the United States as an art critic and cultural envoy to the 2008 Shanghai Biennial. He represented Jamaica in the 2001 Venice Biennale and the 1994 Bial

del Caribe, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Morrison recently retired as professor of painting at Temple University's Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Philadelphia. He is represented in public collections including the Cincinnati Art Museum, OH; Art Institute of Chicago; Philadelphia Museum of Art and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Corcoran Gallery of Art (now Corcoran School of the Arts & Design) and Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Museum of Modern Art, Monterrey, Mexico; and the National Gallery of Art, Kingston, Jamaica.

Eduardo Roca

Cuban, born 1949

Eduardo Roca, also known as "Choco," is a painter and printmaker born in Santiago, Cuba. He is a graduate of the Escuela de Instructores de Arte and the Escuela Nacional de Arte, Havana. Roca has had solo exhibitions in Cuba, Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Sweden, Japan, France, United Kingdom, Germany, and the US. His work can be found around the world in collections including Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana; Museo Nacional de la Estampa, Mexico City; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; and Tama Art University Museum, Tokyo, Japan. He was also a member of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba and the Taller Experimental de Gráfica, Havana.

Yelaine Rodriguez

American/Dominican, born 1990

Yelaine Rodriguez is an Afro-Dominican artist, educator, curator, and cultural organizer. In New York City, she received a BFA in fashion design from Parsons School of Design/The New School and an MA in Latin American and Caribbean studies/museum studies from New York University. Rodriguez's curatorial projects include *Radical Elegance* at Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, Bronx, NY, 2021; *Afro Syncretic* at New York University, 2019-2020; and *Resistance, Roots, & Truth* at the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, New York City, 2018. Her work has been exhibited at venues including Photoville, Brooklyn, NY; Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin; American Museum of Natural History and El Museo del Barrio, New York City; and El Centro Cultural de España, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Moses Ros-Suárez

American/Dominican, born 1958

Moses Ros-Suárez is a Dominican-American architect, sculptor, painter, and printmaker who lives and works in the Bronx, NY. Ros-Suárez is a member of the artist collectives Dominican York Project GRÁFICA and ArteLatAm, Brooklyn. He studied printmaking at Bronx Printmakers and has worked in major printmaking workshops in New York City including Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, Lower East Side Printshop, and Manhattan Graphics Center. He has created large-scale public art commissions for the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, Bronx Council for the Arts, and New York City Housing

Authority, plus stained-glass windows for the Metropolitan Transit Authority. He had solo exhibitions at the Yeshiva University Museum, New York City; Paterson Museum, NJ; The Bronx Museum of the Arts, NY; and El Instituto de Cultura y Arte, Santiago, Dominican Republic.

Juan Sánchez

American/Puerto Rican, born 1954

Photographer, painter, printmaker, and mixed-media artist Juan Sánchez was born to Puerto Rican and African American parents in Brooklyn, NY. He earned his BFA from The Cooper Union, New York City, and an MFA from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. His art is in public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Modern Art, and El Museo del Barrio, all in New York City; Smithsonian American Art Museum, National Portrait Gallery, and National Museum of African American History and Culture, all in Washington, DC; and Mead Museum of Art, Amherst, MA. Sánchez is a professor of painting, photography, and combined media at Hunter College, New York City.

Julio Valdez

Dominican/American, born 1969

Julio Valdez is a painter, printmaker, teacher, and mixed-installation artist born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He is a graduate of the National School of Fine Arts, Santo Domingo, and the Altos de Chavón School of Design, La Romana, Dominican Republic. In 1993, the artist relocated to New York and subsequently received a fellowship from the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, New York City. He has exhibited his work nationally and internationally, including being the official representative for the Dominican Republic at the 2019 Venice Biennale.



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