



**REDISCOVER THE ART OF RUFINO TAMAYO  
AN ICON OF MODERN ART FROM MEXICO  
AT MIAMI ART MUSEUM**

June 24 – September 23, 2007

The first major U.S. exhibition in nearly 30 years of the work of acclaimed Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo (1899-1991), *Tamayo: A Modern Icon Reinterpreted* will be on view at Miami Art Museum June 24 – September 23, 2007. The internationally traveling exhibition features paintings from private and institutional collections all over the world, including works that have not been on public view for decades.

In conjunction with the first public viewing of the exhibition on June 24, from 2 to 4pm MAM and the Mexico Tourism Board will present A Festival of Mexico: Oaxaca!, on the Cultural Center Plaza at 101 West Flagler Street in downtown Miami. The afternoon begins with a lecture by Diana C. du Pont, Santa Barbara Museum of Art Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art and the exhibition's Project Director, in MAM's auditorium. Following the talk, folk dancers, arts and crafts, food and musicians from Tamayo's native city, Oaxaca, will fill the Cultural Center Plaza with the same colors and liveliness that mark the paintings on view in the adjoining galleries. Participation in both events is free for MAM members, the lecture is \$5 for non-members.

*Tamayo: A Modern Icon Reinterpreted* brings together approximately 100 of the best canvases, gouaches, and watercolors made by Tamayo over a long and productive career that spanned seven decades. The largest section of the show profiles Tamayo's remarkable work of the 1940s and 1950s, in which he developed a unique form of figurative abstraction. The exhibition seeks not only to present a careful selection of Tamayo's finest works, but also to offer a contemporary reinterpretation of this world-renowned artist.

"Tamayo openly and freely melded modernist concepts and practices from Mexico, Europe, and the United States: his fusion modernism forged links between the Mexican School, the New York School, and European figure painting of the 1940s and 1950s," said Diana C. du Pont, Santa Barbara Museum of Art Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art and the exhibition's Project

Director. "Tamayo was committed to the human experience as the primary subject of art, while remaining dedicated to the modernist ethos of formal experimentation."

"He called his approach to art 'nondescriptive realism' and remained convinced, like Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros, and Picasso, that to create completely unrecognizable art would be bourgeois and decadent," du Pont added. "Tamayo's international perspective and aesthetic approach serve as an example for the contemporary Mexican artist working globally. Thus, in many ways, Tamayo had and continues to have a significant influence, which this exhibition seeks to understand."

Unlike other major Mexican artists active in the first half of the twentieth century, Tamayo did not espouse the politically charged social realist approach to painting that became widely identified with modern Mexican art. Instead, he focused on what he called the "pure qualities of painting." His attention to line, form and vibrant colors, resulted in works that he described as "universal while retaining a specifically Mexican accent."

In one of his many essays on Tamayo's work, Nobel Prize-winning poet Octavio Paz, a long-time friend of the artist, observed: "If I could express with a single word what it is that distinguishes Tamayo from other painters, I would say, without a moment's hesitation: sun. For the sun is in all his pictures, whether we see it or not."

The exhibition, which has been organized chronologically while emphasizing the themes that run through the artist's work, provides viewers with a complete overview of Tamayo's creative career. The exhibition begins with a small group of his early impressionist-inspired landscapes and cubist-related works; it continues with a broad selection of his signature mature works and closes with a group of his best late paintings.

*Tamayo: A Modern Icon Reinterpreted* is organized by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in collaboration with the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, through the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico, and the Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo, AC. It is curated by Diana C. du Pont, Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, with Juan Carlos Pereda, Curator of the Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo.

The exhibition and accompanying publication have been made possible through the generous support of Larry and Astrid Hammett, Houston and Anne Harte, Jon B. and Lillian Lovelace, Eli and Leatrice Luria, Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree, The Challenge Fund, The Cheeryble Foundation, The Grace Jones Richardson Trust, the National Endowment for the Arts, an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, and an anonymous donor.

In Miami, the exhibition is coordinated by Assistant Curator René Morales and was planned during the tenure of MAM Founding Director Suzanne Delehanty.

The Miami presentation is supported in part by the Consulate General of Mexico, Mexico Tourism Board, Neoris and MAM's Annual Exhibition Fund.

The Miami Art Museum is dedicated to engaging the public with art from the twentieth century through the present. Since its founding in 1996, the Museum has built a collection of contemporary art with the goal of providing Miami with a legacy for future generations. MAM's collection has grown exponentially since Art in America called it "the quintessential Miami collection" in 1999. The MAM collection is dedicated to international art of the 20th and 21st centuries, taking a hemispheric perspective of the Americas.

### **About the Artist**

Rufino del Carmen Arellanes Tamayo was born August 25, 1899, in Oaxaca, Mexico. He studied in Mexico City's Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (National School of Fine Arts). He worked at the Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía (National Museum of Archaeology, History, and Ethnography), where, beginning in 1921, he was head of the Department of Ethnographic Drawing and taught art classes in Mexico City's public schools using the Adolfo Best-Maugard Drawing Method. In April 1926, Tamayo mounted his own one-person show in Mexico City, the first solo exhibition of his career. In June 1926, Tamayo moved to New York with his friend, the composer Carlos Chávez. His first solo show there, at the Weyhe Gallery, earned him critical acclaim that praised him for both his "authentic" status as a Mexican of indigenous heritage and for his internationally appealing modernist aesthetic. Tamayo was honored with his first major retrospective at the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts) in Mexico City in 1948. In 1950 Tamayo was among the first Mexican artists to be included in the Venice Biennale. On the occasion of his 80th birthday, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York inaugurated *Rufino Tamayo: Myth and Magic*. On June 24, 1991, two months before his 92nd birthday, Rufino Tamayo died in Mexico City.

### **About the Curator**

Diana C. du Pont, Project Director for *Tamayo: A Modern Icon Reinterpreted*, has served since 1992 as Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Tamayo is part of a series of major monographic exhibitions launched by Ms. du Pont with the objective of individually exploring Latin American artists and their contributions. Initiated at the SBMA in 2000, this exhibition series realized its first major one-person first exhibition of a Latin American artist in 2003 with its successful *Risking the Abstract: Mexican Modernism and the Art of Gunther Gerzso*.

During her fifteen-year tenure, SBMA has emerged as a leader in the field, moving to re-categorize Latin American art into a more expansive sphere—the art of the Americas—and to challenge narrow, regional readings of this work by shifting the emphasis to hemispheric as well as global concerns. In 2004, *Art of the Americas: Latin America and the United States, 1800 to Now!* offered viewers to SBMA the opportunity to compare works from Latin America and the United States in the same galleries, side by side, and in striking juxtapositions that encouraged fresh ideas of what it means to be American. This innovative installation was followed in 2005 with *Picture Stories: The Art of Europe and the Americas*, which expanded this new permanent collection model to include the art of Europe.

Ms. du Pont earned her M.A. in the History of Art from the University of California, Berkeley, and began her curatorial career at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, where she contributed to the museum's collection catalogue of painting and sculpture before serving as a curator of photography. From 1990 to 1992, she served as Curator of Exhibitions at the University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach, where her responsibilities included organizing exhibitions of contemporary art for the highly regarded exhibition series Centric. Exhibitions of contemporary art that Ms. du Pont has organized since joining the SBMA include *Public Art Reconsidered: Jenny Holzer's "Under A Rock," Nam June Paik: Video Art Pioneer*, and *Copywork: The Dictionary Pages and Other Diversions by Gilles Barbier*. She has also brought to the Museum major traveling exhibitions of modern and contemporary art, including *The Art of David Ireland: The Way Things Are; Heartland: Paintings by Bo Bartlett, 1978-2002; In the American Grain: Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Alfred Stieglitz; The People's Choice: Komar and Melamid's Scientific Guide to Art; Beatrice Wood: A Centennial Tribute*; and *In the Spirit of Fluxus*.

**Tour Schedule:**

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, Calif., February 17 – May 27, 2007

Miami Art Museum, Miami, Fla., June 24 – September 23, 2007

Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico, October 26, 2007-January 21, 2008

**Publication:**

A fully illustrated catalogue, published by SBMA in association with Turner Libros, Mexico City, includes essays by leading scholars and curators from both the United States and Mexico. The 460 page publication will be sold through the MAM store for \$49.95 (paperback) and \$75 hardback.

**Gallery Notes**

This illustrated take-home brochure provides background information on Rufino Tamayo's work and an in-depth examination of the exhibition. Available in the galleries. Free.

**Opening Reception**

**Saturday, June 23, 2007**

6 to 8pm

DJ, hors d'oeuvres, donation bar

MAM Members only

Remarks

6:30

**A Festival of Mexico: Oaxaca!**

**Sunday, June 24, 2007**

2-4pm

2pm

Lecture: Rufino Tamayo

Diana C. du Pont

MAM Auditorium

MAM members free

non-members \$5

3pm

Folk dancers, musicians, food and arts and crafts from Oaxaca, Cultural Center Plaza

Sponsored by Mexico Tourism Board

**Second Saturdays are Free for Families**

**Second Saturday of every month, 1 – 4pm**

Drop in to enjoy fun, interactive programs. Families of all ages explore MAM together, find inspiration to create works of art, and participate in hands-on activities led by Education Staff.

**July 14, 2007**

**Eye on Tamayo**

Update an ancient abstract eye design in colorful yarn based on an "Ojo de Dios" – a Mexican symbol of good luck.

**August 11, 2007**

**Cosmic Cut-Outs**

Create symmetrical "spirit" forms using a Mexican *amate* paper-cutting technique inspired by Tamayo's far-out figures.

**Sundays are Free at MAM**

12 – 5pm

Guided tours of the exhibition every Sunday at 2pm. Sponsored by The Miami Herald/Nuevo Herald.

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Open Tuesday through Friday - 10 AM to 5 PM, Saturday and Sunday – noon to 5 PM. Third Thursdays until 8:30 PM. Closed Monday. Admission for MAM members, children under 12 and students (with valid ID) is free. Adults \$5, seniors \$2.50. Free admission every Sunday and second Saturdays.

101 West Flagler Street  
Miami, FL 33130  
305.375.3000  
miamiartmuseum.org

Garage Parking  
\$5 at 50 NW 2nd Ave  
between Flagler St and NW 1st St  
Overflow parking at 270 NW 2nd Street  
Metrorail: Government Center Station