

Art

11 Radical Latin American Women Artists You Should Know

Alexxa Gotthardt May 23, 2018 6:09 pm   

Ask an average person to name an Latin American woman artist, and they'll most likely mention Frida Kahlo. There's no disputing Kahlo's place in the art-historical canon as a master of Surrealism and self-portraiture. But even she confronted hurdles on her journey into history books and popular consciousness—including the flagrant marginalization she faced as both a female and Latin American artist.

While Kahlo's practice has mostly transcended sexist readings, many other Latin American women artists haven't been as fortunate.

"Throughout art history, the people who've had the power to write dominant narratives decided to exclude women *and* art made in Latin America," curator Cecilia Fajardo-Hill told *Artsy*. "It's a form of segregation, and it is unacceptable."

Fajardo-Hill is the co-curator, along with Andrea Giunta, of "Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985," a sprawling show that began its tour at Los Angeles's Hammer Museum and is currently on view at the Brooklyn Museum. It is only the second-ever large-scale American museum exhibition to spotlight Latin American female artists, many exhibitions," Fajardo-Hill continued. "This is the first of many that should happen."

Below, we highlight 11 Latin American women artists (from "Radical Women" and beyond) whose work has influenced countless artists, but who've yet to receive recognition on par with their male peers.

Teresa Burga (b. 1935)

Lives and works in Peru



Teresa Burga *Sin titulo / Untitled*, 1967
Barbara Thumm



Teresa Burga *Cubes*, 1968

Throughout Teresa Burga's 60-year career, she's placed the female body at the center of her Pop-inflected practice. Her playful, incisive paintings and sculptures have questioned female stereotypes and patriarchal art-world hierarchies. Simultaneously, they implicate mass media and totalitarian rule as culprits of chauvinism.

Burga began her career in the 1960s, as political unrest in Peru escalated. A founding member of Groupe Arte Nuevo, which helped introduce the avant-garde work of Pop art and Happenings to Peru, her early work resisted dictator Juan Velasco Alvarado's nationalist preference towards indigenous art. Bright figurative paintings from the '60s parodied sexist portrayals of women, while modular sculptures built from cubes (think Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*, 1964) depicted body parts and addressed commodification of the female form.

Other pieces were more research intensive. For *Profile of the Peruvian Woman* (1980–81), Burga and psychotherapist Marie-France Cathelat researched the lives of middle-class women as fodder for a multimedia installation exploring the dissonance between real Peruvian women and the stereotypes placed on them.