



NOVEMBER 9, 2021 - JANUARY 27, 2022

SANTIAGO RODRÍGUEZ OLAZÁBAL

(Cuba, 1955)

MARKS OF THE NIGHT

A prominent avant-garde artist of the contemporary Cuban scene, Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal is also a priest of Ifá, an Afro-Cuban religion. Nurtured by traditions of African origin, his body of work provides a powerful intellectual incentive to approach the complexities and the beauty of the Yoruba culture which travelled from Nigeria to Cuba during centuries of slavery.

In his work, Olazábal reappropriates the languages and methodologies of traditional Western cultures which he combines with the local context of religious fusions to express universal wisdom. His monumental paintings and his drawings represent mysterious, profound and painful feelings by depicting symbolic, allegorical, and often metaphorical facets of life.

Through layers of hybrid and composite approaches stemming from the conceptual formulation of his kaleidoscopic personal iconographical journey, Olazábal has gained a unique position within the panorama of contemporary Cuban art, marked by his exaltation of the edges of religious syncretism.

When Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal entered the artistic scene in the mid-1980s, the knowledge of Ifá began to gradually move beyond the esoteric domain, where it had remained under the sole control of the babalawos, and thus started circulating within the more liberal artistic circles. The knowledge of Ifá became the subject of public exhibits and art criticism, being reproduced in catalogues and magazines, thereby fully becoming a constituent of contemporary Cuban culture.

The artist actively contributes to this emancipation and diversity.

MARKS OF THE NIGHT / LAS MARCAS DE LA NOCHE

25 shapes of black animate the white purity of the space. 25 human forms are depicted in movement, seemingly subjugated to gravity by a single piece of red thread. As a series, Marks of the Night is a universal representation of the modern human being, torn by the forces of the world inhabited.

In his first solo show with the gallery, Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal questions notions of identity, suffering, and resilience, through his very personal depictions of the human body and its direct environment. This graphic series was composed during the pandemic and reflects the artist's interrogations about the human condition in the light of this global tragedy that rocked our assumptions.

"The image used to create these works came to me between light and darkness, between day and night, between the sound of silence, and the very metamorphosis of silence."

Olazábal is a priest of Ifá, the most complex and prestigious divinatory system used in the Afro-Cuban religion of Santería. High priests of Ifá are known as babalawos and they often attend Santería ceremonies in their capacity as diviners. In Cuba, Ifá typically involves the casting of consecrated palm nuts to answer a question. The babalawo then interprets the message of the nuts depending on how they have fallen; there are 256 possible configurations in the Ifá system, which the babalawo is expected to have memorised. Individuals approach the babalawo seeking guidance, often on financial matters, for which the diviner will consult Orula through the established divinatory method.

The artist's religious function is paramount to the understanding of his work. Telling me about the circumstances surrounding the creation of this new series of mixed media drawings on cardboard, he told me: *"While I was waiting for some secret of Onílé, the Spirit of the Earth, to be revealed, as if the movement of the sound of that silence were to lead me to a Divine Room, the Earth remained firm, shielding from my senses the root of its genealogy, in such a manner that I could not find the opportunity to appreciate that within the apo Ifa, the bag of the soothsayer who carried the harvest of what he had sown. Because we cannot expect a good life on Earth if the proper sacrifices are not made before leaving Òrun, the heaven, or house of the ancestors, as we cannot expect a bird to be born from a snake. Because sacrifice is liberation."*

I can personally find echoes between this sacrificial practice descended from the animist cults of Western and Central Africa, and the way the Western world transcends this global pandemic. The pandemic has demanded tremendous sets of sacrifices, of our generations, freedoms, riches, future growth, of our precious time, and of our affections. And if we are to truly rebound from this almost unparalleled crisis, we will most certainly have to sacrifice a great deal more. As we turn to our systems of belief, and to our faiths, we must ask what it is we must give in order to receive. And even then, will we ever get a clear answer in return?

Doubt is a process of any adventure, the core of every genuine journey, and Santiago further revealed to me his own: *"Perhaps am I not yet ready for when the messenger wants to teach me how to properly serve the secret? Perhaps, this is because the conscience anchored behind my eyes cannot freely enter the house of prayer to unselfishly entertain the intimate? The fundamental truth is that it is necessary to provide the apparent and simplest time and encouragement, for anything that we may want to obtain from the world. It is this idea of giving, of sacrifice, which animates this series of images behind my eyes."*

However cutting clear the result might appear, contrast is perhaps the element of deceit in this particular ensemble of works. Under pure black and white compositions, where red becomes the symbol of what we owe back to the Earth, hide an infinity of possibles, of nuances. The light and the darkness, the body and the cloth, movement in an otherwise stillness of space, all contribute to the universality of context, of soul in the material world.

Evidently, the work becomes the embodiment of our human hybridity, of our plurality, an invitation to discover the realms outside of our own.

Klaus Pas

November 2021



Las Marcas de la Noche 02 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm

All Prices are exclusive of VAT, import duties, transport and insurance.

**Works will be shipped from Cuba, framed
(or unframed if more convenient for collectors).**



Las Marcas de la Noche 01 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



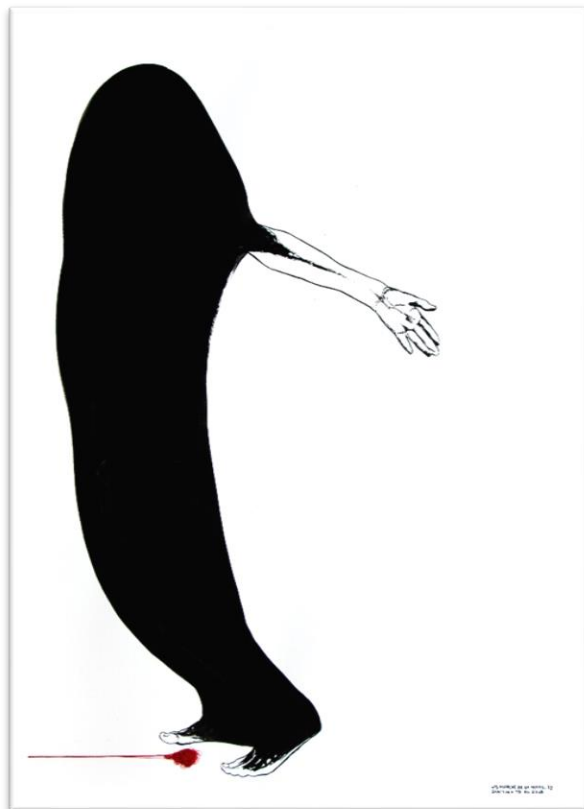
Las Marcas de la Noche 02 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 03 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche D4 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche D5 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 06 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 07 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 08 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT

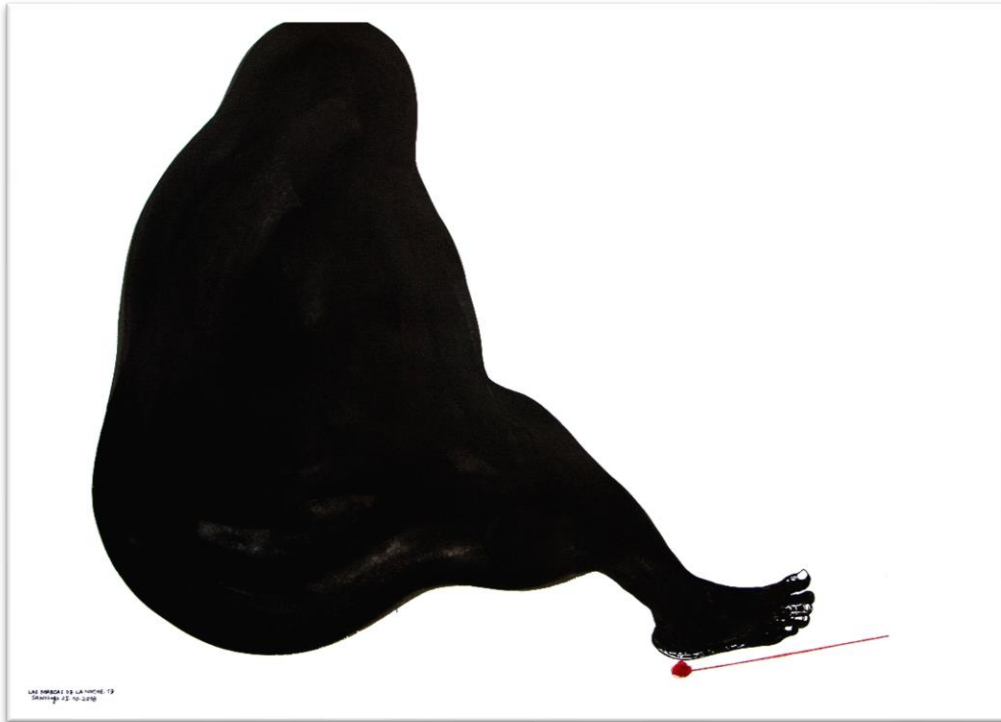


Las Marcas de la Noche 09 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



LAS MARCAS DE LA NOCHE. 10
SANTIAGO 25.10. 2018

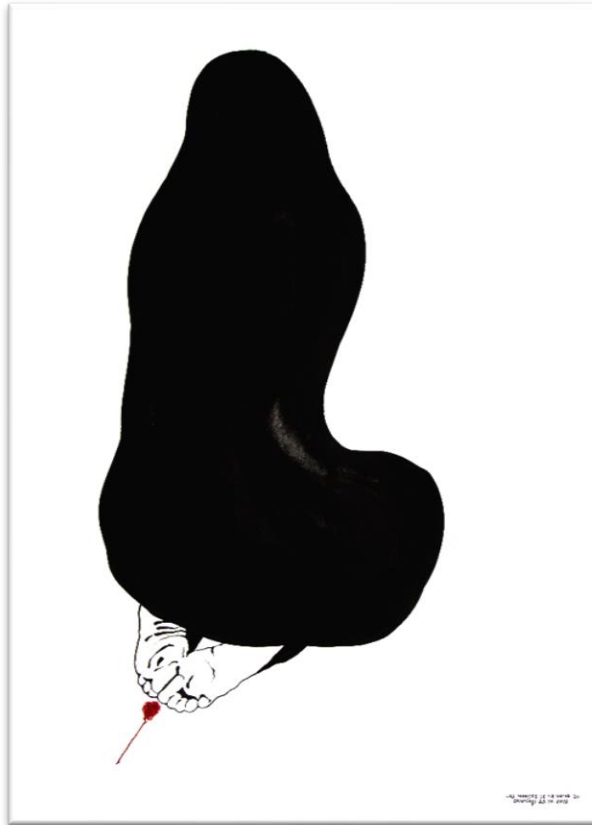
Las Marcas de la Noche 10 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche II (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche II (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



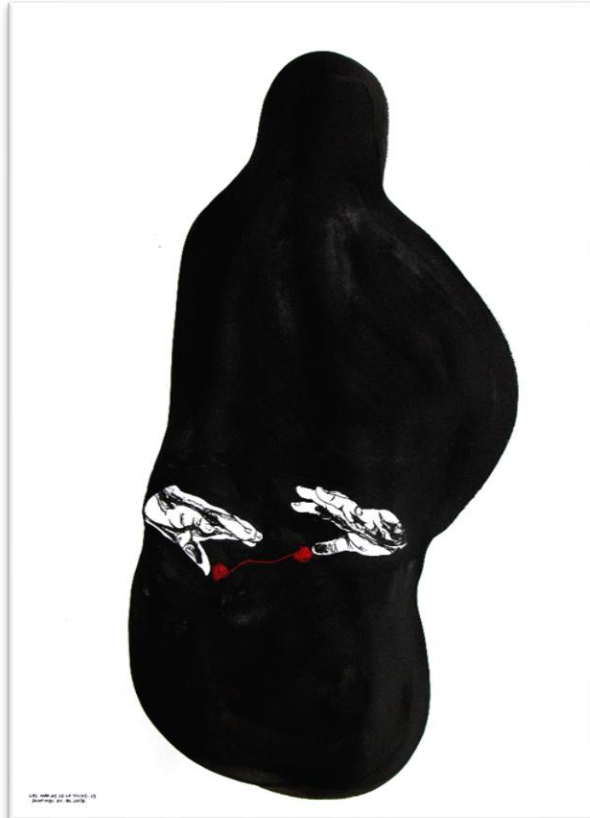
Las Marcas de la Noche 13 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 14 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 15 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 16 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



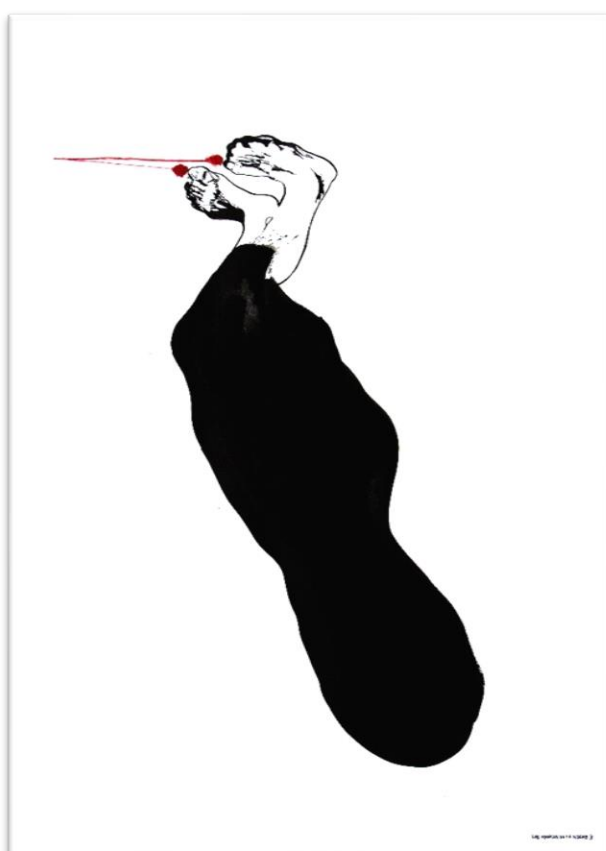
Las Marcas de la Noche 17 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



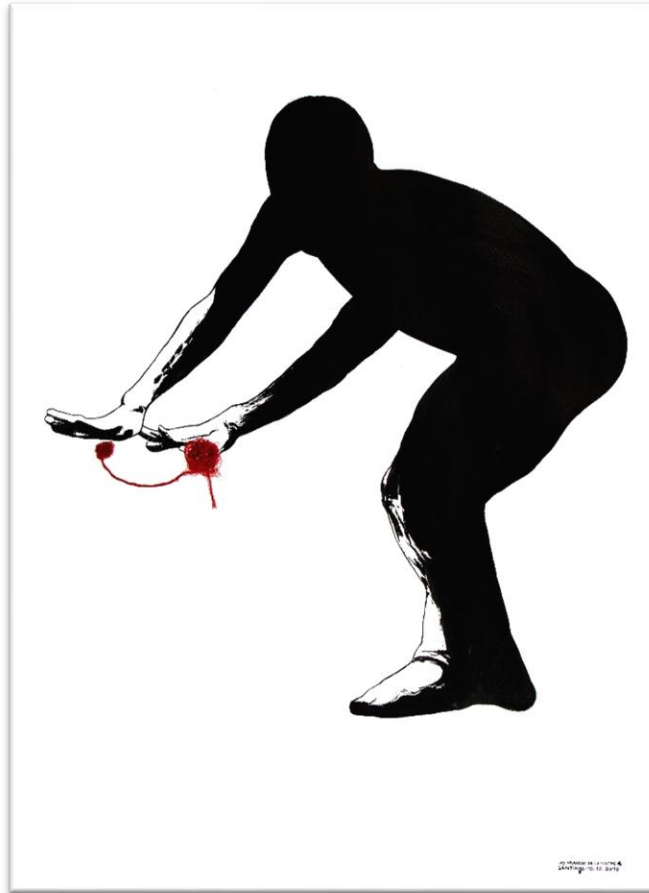
Las Marcas de la Noche 18 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 19 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 20 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



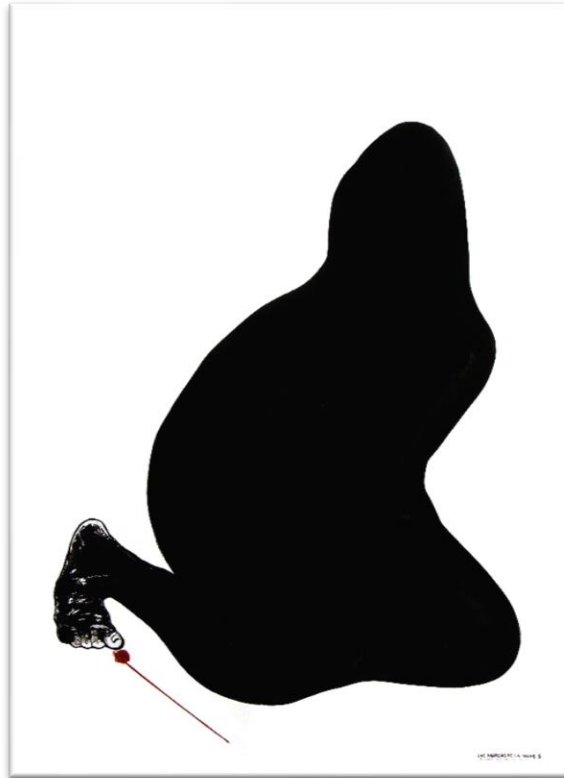
Las Marcas de la Noche 21 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 22 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 75 x 105 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 23 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 24 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT



Las Marcas de la Noche 25 (2020), black ink and red thread on Guarro Poster Board, 105 x 75 cm – EUR 3'500 ex VAT

TO THE EXHIBITION

ASK FOR PRICE LIST



EDUCATION

1972-1975 Academia Nacional de Arte San Alejandro. La Habana. Cuba.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020 DETRÁS DE LOS OJOS. Galería Collage Habana. La Habana. Cuba.

2019 LA NOCHE PUSO SUS OJOS EN ELLA. NG Art Gallery. Panama City. Panama.

2018 HISTORIAS POR CONTAR. Porque hay cosas que se nos escapan. NG Art Gallery.
La Habana. Cuba.

2017 AGUA EN LAS RAÍCES. Galería Collage Habana. La Habana, Cuba.

LO SECRETO. Con Rubén Rodríguez. Galería Villa Manuela. La Habana. Cuba.

- 2016 IMOYE. George Caleb Bingham Gallery. Afrocuban Artist. Columbia. Missouri. USA
- 2015 ADIFAFUN IMOLE. ZONA FRANCA. Colateral 12^{na} Bienal de La Habana. Pabellón Bóveda 27. REGISTROS. COLECCIÓN ELENA VELAZQUEZ. Galería Collage Habana. La Habana. Cuba.
- 2014 COMO UN BARCO EN EL OCEANO. Galería Saro León. Las Palmas, Spain.
- PALABRAS. Galería Habana. La Habana. Cuba.
- 2013 EL IMPULSO DE LOS OJOS. Galería Museo del Ron. La Habana. Cuba.
- GÚEMILERE. Rainhart Gallery. Brussels. Belgium.
- 2012 PERMANECER EN LA TIERRA. 11^{na} Bienal de La Habana. La Habana. Cuba.
- EL IMPULSO DE LOS OJOS. Galería Tristá. Trinidad. Cuba.
- 2011 OLAZABAL. PanAmerican Art Projects. Miami. USA.
- 2009 ORÍ. El Òrisà personal. Galería Villa Manuela. La Habana. Cuba.
- 2008 ORÍ. El Òrisà personal. Galería Tele Pinar. Cuba.
- 2007 PEQUEÑAS COSAS. Galería La Casona. La Habana. Cuba.
- 2006 ONILE. El Espíritu Sagrado De La Tierra. Romerías de Mayo. Holguín. Cuba.
- 2005 ONILE. El Espíritu Sagrado De La Tierra. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. La Habana. Cuba.
- EWE TETE. Galería La Casona. La Habana. Cuba.
- LA TERCERA PUERTA. Centro de Arte Inversiones Arte y Naturaleza Gespart. Madrid. Spain.
- 2003 SCOPE MIAMI ART FAIR. With Galerie Intemporel and Bourbon Lally. Miami. USA.
- 2002 IMAGEN SACA PALABRA Galerie Intemporel. Paris. France.
- PREAMBULO. Galería Pequeño Espacio. Consejo Nacional de las Artes Plásticas. Habana. Cuba.
- YO NUNCA MORIRE. Galería Habana. Cuba.
- 1998 SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ OLAZABAL. Gallery 20 x 2. Arnhem. The Netherlands.
- 1997 COLECCION BOURBON LALLY. Institut Français de Haiti. Port au Prince. Haiti.
- LA SEGUNDA PUERTA. Galería Saro León. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Spain.
- 1995 COLECCION PARTICULAR. Galería Espacio Abierto. Revista Revolución y Cultura. Habana. Cuba.
- EYEI EKE. Sangre de Mis Venas. Galería Habana. Cuba.
- EL DESTINO ES TUYO. With Carlos Estévez. Galería Latinoamericana. La Habana. Cuba.
- 1994 EL MEDIADOR. Galería Colorenere. Milan. Italy.
- OBA IKURO. Walter Phillips Gallery. Banff Center for the Arts. Banff, Alberta. Canada.
- CHEIROS. Pallazo Colonnese. Valeri, Vicenza. Italy.
- HECHIZO. Galería Galiano. 5ta Bienal de La Habana. Cuba.
- 1992 DIBUJAR ES UN TRAUMA. Galería Galiano. La Habana. Cuba.
- HERENCIA. 1492 – 1992. 500 AÑOS. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. La Habana. Cuba.
- 1991 BLANCO Y NEGRO. Galería de Arte Benito Ortiz. Trinidad. Cuba.
- HALITO DE LA TIERRA. Con Fernando Gómez. Galería Galiano. La Habana. Cuba.
- OBO LOWO OOLORUN. Todo lo Dejo en Manos de Dios. 4^{ta} Bienal de La Habana. Cuba.
- 1988 LA ORACION. Centro Provincial de Artes Plásticas y Diseño. La Habana. Cuba.
- 1985 OKAN TO MI. Desde Mi Corazón. Centro Provincial de Artes Plásticas y Diseño. La Habana. Cuba.
- 1983 EL HOMBRE EL MITO. Con Eliseo Valdés. Galería Galiano. La Habana. Cuba.

RECENT GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

- 2021 HEALING POWER. National Museum of World Cultures. The Netherlands.
- CANTOS DE GRIOT. Domus Atrium 2002. Salamanca. Spain.
- 2020 TRANSFORMATION DECODED: Unimagined Possibilities. Arthaus Gallery. Pennsylvania. USA.
- 2019 SCOPE MIAMI. NG Art Gallery. Miami. USA.
- ARTLIMA. Lima, Perú. NG Art Gallery.
- 2018 SCOPE MIAMI. NG Art Gallery. Miami Beach. USA
- CHACO. Feria Arte Chile. NG Art Gallery. Chile.

- MERAKI. NG Art Gallery. Panama City, Panama.
- CUBAN CONTEMPORARY EXHIBIT. Sager - Braudis Gallery. Columbia, Missouri. USA
- GLOBAL REFLECTIONS. The Interchurch Center. New York. USA.
- 2017 ART MADRID 2017. 12^{da} Feria de Arte Contemporáneo. Galería Collage Habana. Madrid. Spain.
- ART X CUBA. Contemporary Perspectives. Ludwig Forum fur Internationale Kunst, Germany.
- 2016 DRAPETOMANIA. African American Museum in Philadelphia. USA.
- 2015 DRAPETOMANIA. Cooper Gallery of African American Art. Harvard. USA.
- MEMORIAL ACTe. Centre Caribéen d'Expressions et de Mémoire de la Traite et de l'Esclavage. Pointe à Pitre. Guadeloupe.
- CUBA. FICCION Y FANTASIA. Casa DAROS. Colección DAROS Latinamerica. Río de Janeiro. Brazil.
- 2014 KNOKKE ART FAIR. Rainhart Gallery. Belgium.
- Museum of Anthropology of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.
- DRAPETOMANIA. The 8th Floor. New York. USA.
- DRAPETOMANIA. Museum of the African Diaspora. MoAD. San Francisco. USA.
- 2013 A JOURNEY FROM PARIS TO NEW YORK. Galerie Intemporel. New York. USA.
- AFRICAN ROOTS. Center for Cuban Studies. New York. USA.
- 2011 LOS ANGELES ART SHOW. La Casona Gallery. California. USA.
- POLARIDAD COMPLEMENTARIA. City Gallery at Waterfront Park. Charleston. SC. USA.
- AJIACO. ESPIRITUALIDAD EN EL ARTE CUBANO. Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.
- PINTA LONDRES. Earls Court Exhibition Centre. London. UK.
- SPIRITUALITÉ, RITUELS ET IMAGINAIRES DE CARIBE. Fort de France. Martinique.
- PINTA. The Modern & Contemporary Latin American Art Show. Cuban Art Projects. NYC. USA.

Please ask for the full list of exhibitions.

NOTABLE COLLECTIONS

- MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES. La Habana. Cuba.
- CENTRO ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO WIFREDO LAM. La Habana. Cuba.
- GALERÍA LATINOAMERICANA CASA DE LAS AMÉRICAS. La Habana. Cuba.
- LUDWIG COLECTION AGUISGRAN. Germany.
- GRAFIK MUSEUM STIFTUNG SCHREINER. Bad Steben. Germany.
- CENTRO ATLÁNTICO DE ARTE MODERNO. CAAM. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Spain.
- AFRIKA MUSEUM. Berg en Dal, Nijmegen. The Netherlands.
- DAROS-LATINAMERICAN COLLECTION. Zurich. Switzerland.
- CENTRO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO JUAN ISMAEL. Spain
- SKANDAR MALEKI COLLECTION. London. UK.
- THE PAS-CHAUDIR ART COLLECTION, Belgium.
- THE VON CHRISTIERSON COLLECTION. WATCH HILL FOUNDATION. UK.
- CEIBA COLLECTION. La Habana, Cuba / Zurich. Switzerland.
- CONSEJO NACIONAL de las ARTES PLÁSTICAS. La Habana. Cuba.
- PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS. Miami. USA.
- CONSEIL REGIONAL MARTINIQUE. Fort de France, Martinique.
- NICOLE MUSEUM. France.
- COLLAGE HABANA. Fondo Cubano de Bienes Culturales. La Habana. Cuba.
- MEMORIAL ACTe. Centre Caribéen d'Expressions et de Mémoire de la Traite et de l'Esclavage. Pointe à Pitre. Guadeloupe.
- BROWNSTONE FOUNDATION. Paris. France.
- LA KOLE. LKO. Cuban Art Collection. Barcelona. Spain.

- THE W ART COLLECTION. NYC & Easton, PA. New York. USA.
- NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WORLD CULTURES. Leiden. The Netherlands.
- COLECCIÓN LUCIANO MENDEZ. Salamanca. Spain.

AWARDS

2014 KNOKKE ART FAIR. Special Award for most original work. Knokke. Belgium.
 2007 Award for Artistic Merit. Instituto Superior de Arte. La Habana. Cuba.
 2005 ONILE. El Espíritu Sagrado De La Tierra. Visitor Award. The Vatican.
 1992 4th BIENNIAL OF ANKARA. International Gold Award. Ankara. Turkey.
 1990 SALON NACIONAL DE PAISAJE. Premio. Galería Guantánamo. Cuba.
 1987 ENCUESTRO GRABADO '87. Experimental Award. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. La Habana. Cuba.
 1986 ARA OKO. Medal Son of the City of Guanabacoa. La Habana. Cuba.
 1986 SALON DE LA CIUDAD. Drawing Award. Centro Provisional de Artes Plásticas. La Habana. Cuba.

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