Staging a Modern Nation: The Art and Architecture of the Peruvian Pavilion at The 1939/40 New York World’s Fair

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Staging a Modern Nation: The Art and Architecture of the Peruvian Pavilion at The 1939/40 New York World’s Fair

By

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Introduction

Future Past: U.S. and Peruvian Objectives for the Fair

Amidst the opening day regalia, the marching bands and concession stands in Flushing Meadows, Queens, the New York World’s Fair (NYWF) opened to the public on April 30, 1939. Visitors paid a 0.75 cent admission fee to gain access to colorful fairgrounds organized around the recognizable trylon and perisphere, and an oversized white sphere and spire that symbolized the Fair’s theme, “The World of Tomorrow,” (fig.1). Exhibitions sponsored by corporations, government agencies, individual U.S. states and foreign countries were housed in pavilions in modernist styles never seen before, linking the notion of cultural achievement with industrial innovation (fig.2). The focus of this thesis is on the art and architecture of the Peruvian pavilion at the Fair (fig.3). While each of the foreign pavilions at the NYWF is deserving of its own study, the strengthening of the United States’ engagement and interest in Latin American culture and industry at this time makes the event of the World’s Fair a marked occasion for observing and analyzing the state of the Americas at this moment in history. The Peruvian pavilion’s squat, white rectangular building, located within the “Government Zone,” was situated next to other foreign pavilions and contained displays of Ancient and modern art as well as commercial products, to present a “Peruvian experience” to fairgoers.

The United States pavilion was the centerpiece of this area of the fairgrounds, and “appeared at the end of a giant ‘conference table’ at which nations of the world meet in friendly exchange” (fig. 4). According to the Fair’s officials, as summarized by historian Marco Duranti, this international setting was an opportunity for visiting countries to prove their relevance, and

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growing competitiveness, mainly industrial, to the United States.² This thesis will use the instance of Peruvian participation in a United States-sponsored event to write a case study about how objects, space, form, and figures work together to construct narratives of authenticity, nationalism and modernity.

The history of state-sponsored World’s Fairs stemmed from the nineteenth century Universal Expositions, starting with the 1851 Crystal Palace in London. World exhibitions have attempted to organize the direction of society from the perspective of the host nation. Initially contained within large, cavernous spaces, these international events soon sprawled out onto vast grounds, with individual exhibits (or pavilions) and nations occupying their own structures. While many fairs adhered to unified architectural theme, historian Robert Rydell argues that World’s Fairs in the United States at the turn of the century were “unique only in that they helped shape the increasing efforts by the United States to manage the world from its own rapidly expanding imperial perspective.”³ As the American economy began to recover from the Great Depression, the overall goal of world exhibitions “continued to be America’s national progress toward a utopian future, but that theme contained a shift in emphasis,” as progress came to rely more on profits from consumer spending.⁴ With a war brewing in Europe, the New York World’s Fair organizers shifted their focus to their neighbors to the South in search of potential sources for industry and capital.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s speech on the opening day at the Fair focused specifically on a united “American continent.” After lamenting the situation in Europe, he addressed the crowd, stating that “the years to come will break down many barriers to

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intercourse between [American] nations. Nearly a year later, Edward F. Roosevelt, the Latin American Commissioner to the New York World’s Fair was interviewed upon returning from a trip to secure participation from this region for the second season of the Fair, which operated from spring to the fall of 1940. Many European pavilions were unable to return to the Fair, as these countries had been invaded and occupied over the course of the Fair’s first season. Edward F. Roosevelt is quoted as calling for the preservation of an American heritage of liberty and democracy. His summation is an exceptional glimpse into the official position of the Fair’s organizers:

A New World, a designation which in recent years has gone rather into discard, is again regarded in just that light — a hemisphere of fabulous natural resources and unlimited opportunities for development and progress. The Americans constitute an oasis of sanity in a wasteland of international madness. The conviction in Latin America is that we on this oasis must keep the lamp of civilization burning for all mankind.

This statement frames the Americas as a beacon for the future. The World’s Fair focus on this region underlines the Pan-American imperialist outlook of U.S. policies. Expressing hemispheric unity, the policies bolstered an interest by U.S. citizens in developing commerce and trade in the region. Burgeoning opportunities led to the construction of Latin American infrastructures as anticipated in E. F. Roosevelt’s report. These policies were in contrast to the prior ideology of Pan-Hispanism that privileged the colonial connection between Spain, Portugal, and Central and South America.

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6 These pavilions included the Polish and Czechoslovak representation. For more on the history of World War II and the NYWF, see Duranti, “Utopia, Nostalgia and World War at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair.”


9 Many Latin American countries engaged in this outlook, as evidenced by the pavilions at the Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla 1929.
American Studies historian Amy Spellacy outlines the United States’ Pan-American economic viewpoint of the Western hemisphere in her 2006 text *Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor: Geography, Globalism, and Pan-Americanism during the 1940s*. Her argument is focused around the U.S.-constructed metaphor that rescaled the hemisphere as a neighborhood, “creating a manageable, contained space out of what would otherwise be an unwieldy collection of geographically distant and culturally distinct nations.”¹⁰ This rhetoric surrounding the Americas signals a U.S. attempt to solidify power and authority over the region by securing the resources of Latin American nations.

Policies favoring Pan-American trade and commerce led to the development of private and public organizations, associations, and professional societies. Robert Alexander González’s text *Designing Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere* notes the formation of these groups of “hemispheric enthusiasts” as a method to access a “perceived tropical, virgin land” to the south.¹¹ In the case of the Peruvian pavilion, records from 1940 meetings of the Peruvian-American Association Inc. (founded in 1939) illustrate the support of members for the nation’s continued participation in the New York Fair. Board members from companies such as Pan-American Airways, United States Steel products and the American Metal Company met and discussed methods to support the continuation of the Peruvian pavilion at the NYWF.¹² The formation and support for Peruvian commerce by U.S. companies and investors point to the growing relevance of Peru to the new-bred Pan-American economy.

The mapping of the Latin American presentation at the NYWF enacted the rhetoric of the

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Good Neighbor policy. Intending to communicate hemispheric unity, the space of fairgrounds was designed and managed by United States organizers who could exert control over the final presentations, similar to the aforementioned policy that promoted a closed system and the symbolic and physical dominance of the U.S. Gonzalez provides a useful summary of how these 20th century policies revealed themselves through architecture, modeling a “Pan American subject, an imagined personification of the history, cultural practices and attitudes.” Designers who evoked this subject reduced Latin American nations to essentialized characteristics, such as the cornucopia filled with gold coins at the feet of the statue welcoming visitors to the Peruvian pavilion (fig.5). Within the system and structure of the Fair, nations were encouraged to present an “authentic” national image. In most cases, Latin American participation entailed a presentation in conversation with the fair’s Pan-American rhetoric, yet confined to a nationalistic display. This thesis will explore the regulated symbols, art, and architecture of the specific case of the Peruvian pavilion at the Fair.

In a letter dated from August 18, 1937, E. F. Roosevelt, the Latin American Commissioner to the Fair wrote to Admiral W.H. Standley, the Director of Foreign Participation from Guayaquil, Ecuador. The two-page document reports on Roosevelt’s progress in securing the initial Latin American participation at the New York Fair, following his visit to Peru. Meeting with President Óscar Benavides, Roosevelt details his time in Lima and notes his visit with Benavides to social and “engineering works built by army and civil engineers,” continuing that both of these projects had the potential to be “beautifully dramatized at the fair from a propaganda point of view.”

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14 E. F. Roosevelt to Admiral Standley, August 18, 1937, Box 1501 Folder 2 New York World's Fair 1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records, Central Files, Government, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
later, Roosevelt also reported that President Benavides was interested “in the utmost degree” in participating in the Fair. Reviewing the social and political history of Peru in the 1930s reveals motivations for the country’s eventual participation in the NYWF.

At this point in the 20th century, Peru was recovering from the Great Depression and the downfall of the authoritarian regime of Augusto B. Leguía. The emergence of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) created tension between the socialist party and a coalition of the elite and the military, and this mix of viewpoints and platforms eventually defined Peruvian politics for the following three decades. One of these figures, President Benavides (who outlawed the APRA, or apristas) handed over the presidential mandate to Manuel Prado y Ugarteche in 1939 during the run of the NYWF. President Prado’s discrimination against the apristas was not as restrictive, owing partly to shifts within the party movement towards more conservative views, beginning in the 1940s. The apristas dropped their attacks on capitalism, instead praising U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy.¹⁵

In the decades preceding the Fair, foreign investment in the Peruvian economy, namely by U.S. and British sources, led to stimulus and expansion of production in private sectors. These foreign investments and secured loans from banks covered the cost of irrigation, communications and public works. Goods such as sugar, cotton, rice and minerals from mining were primary exports from the country under the leadership of President Leguía in 1929.¹⁶ Free market foreign trade operations continued under President Benavides, and the continued stimulus to private

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sectors resulted in rapid growth of commercial agriculture and mining.\textsuperscript{17} It is under these conditions that W. H. Standley visited Peru, meeting with President Benavides and initiating planning of the pavilion.

In the early stages of planning the Peruvian participation, the Peruvian Commission submitted a “General Plan of Presentation” for the pavilion to World’s Fair officials.\textsuperscript{18} The document outlined the objective of the country’s participation, to cooperate as a “good neighbor” and to strengthen inter-American relations. From the Peruvian point of view, the objective of the building was to portray the flourishing state of the country, governmental activities, historical and cultural outlook, attractions, and natural resources. Integral to the installation was the display of dioramas concerning Peruvian “Worker’s Restaurants,” an initiative of President Benavides.\textsuperscript{19} This was noted in the International Business Machines (IBM) \textit{Book of Nations at the New York World’s Fair} as “true palaces of concrete where laborers dine at a cost of five cents per complete meal” and “children eat breakfast for free.”\textsuperscript{20}

The Benavides administration advocated for economic and educational opportunities for the lower classes of the Peruvian population, which included the indigenous tribes. Often this population and the workers who dined in the government-sponsored restaurants overlapped. During Benavides terms, his administration granted legal recognition to hundreds of indigenous communities and provided them with support in settling land disputes.\textsuperscript{21} Such attention to new definitions of the role of indigenous identity and history in Peru became part and parcel of a global reconsideration of the categories “race,” “ethnicity,” and “nation.” Benavides’ programs

\textsuperscript{17} ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Pike, “The Changing APRA’s Quest for Power,” 275.
were developed and implemented in tandem with *indigenismo* discourse in the Americas. By the late 1930s, official and revolutionary considerations of indigeneity often intertwined, as in the case with the Peruvian pavilion, where artists working in nationalistic and avant-garde contexts were both displayed. Throughout this thesis, the indigenous populations that motivated *indigenismo* are referred to as the “Indian” subject. The colonial misnomer of “Indian” was a popular reference until recently when naming indigenous subjects, and is used in this argument in examining historic viewpoints.

The *indigenismo* movement, formed in cities across Latin America in the early 20th century, varied across practices and diverse political positions. Overall, *indigenismo* was an intellectual movement largely comprised of urban, *mestizo* (mixed-race) thinkers and artists, in response to the European styles of art that were becoming popular in metropolitan areas.\(^22\) Also attempting to shift national history away from the European narrative of the “fallen Inca Empire,” Peruvian *indigenismo* constructed narratives surrounding regional and national cultures which sought to uplift the indigenous population. Activities across the political spectrum of *indigenismo* had little effect on day-to-day lives of the indigenous population.\(^23\)

Until the 20th century, the image of the indigenous populations was a negative one, signaling backwardness. The Peruvian government spent a lot of time and energy rehabilitating this image throughout various modes of representation. The ancient heritage of Peru was the focus of many objects in the Peruvian pavilion at the Fair. The pavilion structure was designed and realized by three innovative artists and educators working in Paris: Elena and Victoria Izcue and Reynaldo Luza. While each had been born in Peru, Elena and Victoria Izcue traveled to Paris


in 1927 to study art under the sponsorship of President Leguía. In Lima, the Izcue sisters had gained recognition in the 1920s for creating what was termed *arte decorativo incáico*, an “Incan decorative art” that drew heavily upon Andean designs (including Inca) in creating furnishings that met the needs of modern society. In Paris, their work eventually led to a textile collaboration with House of Worth in Paris.²⁴ Luza had initially left Lima in 1911 for Belgium. After attending school there, he lived between Paris and New York and began delving into fashion photography, but primarily he is known for his work as a fashion illustrator for *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*.²⁵ The group first began working together in designing the Peruvian pavilion for the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne in Paris in 1937. Luza and the Izcue’s vision for Peruvian pavilions in the late 1930s resulted in a structure that relied heavily on motifs sourced from pre-Columbian cultures to communicate the potential for modern engagement with the past. As Pre-Columbian history gradually became more widely recognized and incorporated within the national discourse, their work serves as an example of artists working abroad to revive the indigenous aesthetic traditions of Peru.

Shortly after the opening of the Peruvian pavilion at the Fair, Elena and Victoria Izcue were interviewed in the Lima-based newspaper, *La Crónica*. Victoria Izcue responded to reporters’ questions regarding their work at the World’s Fair. Of the pavilion specifically she expressed “patriotic satisfaction” with the “great success that they were able to achieve.”²⁶ This quote indicates the nationalistic tone of the fair in New York as well as the popularity of the pavilion. Victoria continues to describe the structure as “the most interesting of all of South

²⁴ Pauline Antrobus, “Peruvian Art of the *Patria Nueva*, 1919-1930” (PhD diss., University of Essex, 1997), 166.  
²⁵ Carlos García Montero Protzel, *Reynaldo Luza 1893-1978*. (Lima: Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano, 2011), exhibition catalogue, 13. Reynaldo Luza’s involvement will not be discussed heavily in this argument, as his role is only briefly mentioned and no additional documentation of his work at the Fair has been found at the time of writing.  
America,” qualifying her statement and continuing with: “Don’t just ask us, but the U.S., authorities and millions of visitors.”27 Press coverage of the pavilion deserves further research, but the overall recognition of the pavilion is in alignment with the growing interest in and scholarship surrounding material and visual culture from Latin America in the United States in the 1930s and 40s. In her summary of the arts at the NYWF, Greet notes that this was the first occasion that Latin American art was differentiated from American (U.S.) art, a division that persists.28 Within the “American Art Today” exhibit on the fairgrounds in Queens, work by contemporary U.S. artists was on display, while simultaneously an exhibition, “Latin American Exhibition of Fine and Applied Arts,” was on view in Manhattan at the Riverside Museum. This presentation, outside of the official fairgrounds, consisted of artists from nine countries showcased and displayed by nationality, emphasizing native imagery as a framework to present an inaccurate, imagined and homogenous vision of Latin American art. Art historian and curator Susanna Temkin connects the vision of the Riverside exhibition to the nationalistic emphasis of the Fair in her analysis of Cuba’s participation in the NYWF and Riverside exhibition.29 While Peru was not a participant, exhibitions like the Riverside presentation provide context for the perceived status of art objects produced by Latin Americans and how these outsider expectations were realized or contradicted in the works that comprised Peru’s national pavilion.

In order to establish a comprehensive overview of the Peruvian Pavilion at the 1939/1940 NYWF in Flushing-Meadows Corona Park in Queens, my research will be divided into four sections. Beginning with an evaluation of the building’s relationship to the site in

27 ibid.
28 Michele Greet, “To New York and Back Again,” in Beyond National Identity: Pictorial Indigenism as a Modernist Strategy in Andean Art, 1920-1960 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 141; Currently museum collections often separate art made in the United States from the rest of the American continent, resulting in “Latin American” art. Greet argues that this division was founded by the separation of the U.S. artists from Latin American at these two fair exhibitions.
Queens, Chapter 1 reconstructs the building’s architecture and checklist of decorative additions, such as doors and windows that were originally installed in the 1937 Paris Peruvian pavilion (figs.12, 13). This chapter also overviews the key fair and Peruvian government officials involved in the planning and building of the pavilion. These well documented exchanges and discussions were necessary to construct the pavilion and underscore the Pan-American political atmosphere of the Fair.30

The bas-relief by Romano Espinoza Cáceda is the subject of Chapter 2 (fig.3). Illustrating an ideal Peruvian society, the composition served as an advertisement for Peru at the Fair. A careful analysis of the symbols and motifs of the allegorical composition precedes a discussion of the sculpture of the female figure installed above the entrance to the pavilion (fig.5). Cáceda’s work for the pavilion connects with historical imagery of colonial Peru, and examination of the artist’s practice indicates factions within artistic circles in Peru.

The third chapter investigates Peruvian painters and sculptures with work on view at the Fair. Artists of interest include Francisco Laso, Carmen Saco, Francisco Gonzalez Gamarra and José Sabogal. Each of these artists present a unique approach to displaying Peruvian nationalism at the Fair. The work of Laso, a 19th century painter, is credited for his role as a precursor to indigenismo painting, due to his extensive depiction of the Indian subject. Carmen Saco, who worked in European and Peruvian contexts, is discussed as an outlier amongst artists in the pavilion. Her concern and involvement with the present and past conditions of the Indian were absorbed into the nationalizing overtone of the pavilion display. A comparison of the work of Gonzalez Gamarra and Sabogal at the Fair suggests that the Peruvian government was shifting

30 A Neo-Peruvian style had been established in Manuel Piqueras Cotoli’s designs for the Peruvian pavilion at the Exposicin Iberoamericana de Sevilla. This structure and Piqueras Cotoli’s engagements with Peruvian nationalist motifs will be discussed in Chapter 2. For more on the pavilion, see: Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, Manuel Piqueras Cotoli (1885-1937): arquitecto, escultor y urbanista entre Espa±a y el Perú (Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 2003).
away from the indigenismo leanings of the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (ENBA) and Sabogal, the school’s director.

The final chapter further focuses on the interior visual program of the pavilion, containing pre-Columbian objects, modern textiles and industry products from Peru. Important to understanding the display of a mummy, textiles, ceramics, and metalwork is the archeological history of Peru and of U.S. intervention, as evidenced by the inclusion of objects from the collections of Rafael Larco Herrero and Nelson Rockefeller. An examination of the exhibitions of the Izcue sisters in New York provides contextual evidence for some of the objects on view in New York. The industrial focus of the pavilion expands on the World’s Fair format as an international market of commodities and ideas. Overall, this complete examination of aspects of the pavilion at the Fair provides a basis to more deeply understand the formation of modern Peruvian national identity.

For a foreign country participating in the Fair, planning and installing a pavilion consisted of extensive coordination across national boundaries, involving multiple parties. In the Foreign Participation files of the New York World’s Fair 1939-1940 Records, held at the New York Public Library, are several files that outline the process of realizing the Peruvian pavilion in New York. This collection of letters, plans, telegrams, photographs and other documentation offer key primary sources for this thesis. The artist files for Elena Izcue and Carmen Saco held at the Brooklyn Museum and The Museum of Modern Art libraries were also valuable resources in my research. Exhibition materials from Elena and Victoria Izcue’s exhibition in New York supplied relevant material in thinking about their work in the pavilion. Providing an expanded

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31 Out of the dozen artists documented as presenting work in the ‘39 pavilion, the inclusion of three women, Elena and Victoria Izcue and Carmen Saco was intended to ground my argument in histories of fashion and Peruvian art. The amount of documentation of their work compared to the larger group of male artists proves their success. However, especially for the Izcue sisters, their practice was quickly placed in the category of craft, given gendered expectations for handmade, functional objects.
viewpoint of the building was press coverage of artists and the pavilion published by U.S. and Peruvian media. These primary materials lacked specific information about works on view in New York. Secondary sources aided in imagining the building and types of objects displayed.

The topic of the Peruvian Pavilion at the 1939/1940 New York World’s Fair has only been mentioned in passing, most extensively in Michele Greet’s chapter entitled “To New York and Back Again,” in Beyond National Identity: Pictorial Indigenism as a Modernist Strategy in Andean Art, 1920-1960, as well as by Natalia Majluf and Luis Eduardo Wuffarden in their monographic catalogue for the 1999 exhibition Elena Izcue: El arte precolombino en la vida moderna. Each of these scholars only mention the pavilion briefly, as their subjects only intersect with the topic.

Many recent studies have focused on Latin American nations at the world exhibitions, such as Mauricio Tenorio Trillo’s book Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation, Greet’s analysis of Ecuador’s pavilion in Beyond National Identity and Susanna Temkin’s article on Cuba at the NYWF, among others. My argument draws upon existing research on Latin American architecture at World’s Fairs and International Expositions such as Modern Architecture in Latin America: Art, Technology, and Utopia by Luis E. Carranza, Fernando Luiz Lara and Robert Alexander González’s text Designing Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere. This project also expands on the work of World’s Fair historians, primarily Robert Rydell’s All the World’s a Fair, Fair America, and The World of Fairs. Each of Rydell’s texts provides an in-depth analysis of U.S. fairs over time, with select chapters focused on the NYWF. Rydell summarizes: “America’s depression-era fairs represented a drive to modernize America by making it an ever more perfect realization of an imperial dream world of

32 Greet, “To New York and Back Again,” 139.
abundance, consumption, and social hierarchy.”  

Central to his scholarship is the research of under-represented and outsider populations at the fairs, as evidenced by his studies of African American labor practices at the NYWF. Neil Harris’ chapter on the Columbian Exposition in Cultural Excursions also provided valuable context for the history of consumerism at U.S. fairs. The work of these scholars legitimizes the context of the World’s fairs as a valuable source for learning more about national art and cultural movements and trends.

Also integral to my research were several texts on the art and history of Peru in the early 20th century. Exhibition catalogues published by the Museum of Art in Lima by Natalia Majluf and Luis Eduardo Wuffarden on Sabogal, the Izcues and Manuel Piqueras Cotolí specified the artistic context pre-dating the Fair, sometimes addressing the artists’ involvement (or lack thereof) in the pavilion. Anthropologist Blenda Femenias’ article discussing the history of Peruvian museums in Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals provided ample discussion of the development of a national archeology in Peru, addressing the prevalence of pre-Columbian material circulating between Peru and U.S. at the time.

Corrupt Circles: A History of Unbound Graft in Peru by historian Alfonso W. Quiroz, Peru: the Authoritative Tradition by political scientist David Scott Palmer and Jorge Coronado’s The Andes Imagined presented an expanded context of Peruvian politics, economics, and society. Coronado reviews this period of Peruvian history, documenting the “explosion of voices on indigenous matters...marked by efforts to rebuild the nation and national pride,” following Peru’s

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loss in the War of the Pacific.\textsuperscript{38} These histories of political corruption and economic dependency on foreign nations presented a Peruvian political context where ideas and people easily and often vacillated between official and revolutionary. In the pavilion, these interactions were illustrated by the range of histories and practices on view.

Intersecting with these sources are studies on Latin American art collected and displayed in the U.S., such as the exhibition publications for \textit{The Nelson A. Rockefeller Vision: In Pursuit of the Best in the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas} the Metropolitan Museum of Art and \textit{Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis} at El Museo del Barrio, both in New York. These texts outline the interest in and acquisition of ancient and modern Latin American art by U.S. institutions. Joanna Pillsbury describes Rockefeller’s view of pre-Columbian art, arguing that he advocated for these objects to be presented as “\textit{art} with aesthetic merit rather than as specimens more suitable for a natural-history museum.”\textsuperscript{39} A focus on the aesthetic qualities of these works was a similar approach to the artists and organizers in the pavilion. These sources work to expand the context surrounding art objects in the pavilion, and result in a comprehensive narrative of national representation within a world exhibition format.

Few researchers have studied a specific Latin American pavilion in its entirety at the New York World’s Fair, from planning and organization of displays to final construction. Studies of the Fair as a pivotal occasion for U.S. art and design are more prevalent than discussions of foreign pavilions. At the time of writing, Fernando Villegas’ study \textit{El Pabellón Peruano en la Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla (The Peruvian Pavilion at the Iberoamerican Exposition in Seville)} is the sole comprehensive discussion of a Peruvian pavilion at a world exposition. Developing scholarship surrounding this nation at international exhibitions expands on the work

\textsuperscript{38} Jorge Coronado, “Introduction,” 6.

of others, such as Villegas and Greet. This thesis situates Peru within the history of international exhibitions, validating the participating artists and their work as valued contributions to American art.

This project revolves around a Peruvian art history that has been codified for a national display. The contents of the pavilion recall Blenda Femenias’ observation of the Peruvian state’s “efforts to hegemonize the past by appropriating Inca and earlier pre-Columbian cultures as Peruvian.” She continues that this position was “both supported and challenged by elite vanguard artists and intellectuals.” When applying this observation to the makeup of artists and designers involved in the Peruvian pavilion, one encounters multiple narratives that intersect at the point of the Fair. Looking to this structure as a node within the circulating networks of U.S. fairs, Latin American art, politics, and economics, the following argument considers the totality of the Peruvian pavilion building at the NYWF. Examining elements from the architecture of the building to the small wool samples displayed inside, this multimedia approach illustrates a dynamic and fractious Peruvian art world ultimately eclipsed and commodified by the Fair organizers.

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Chapter I

Peruvian and Pan-American Fair Architecture in New York

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to describe and analyze the physical structure of the Peruvian pavilion at the NYWF, and to consider the logic of its placement in relation to other buildings on the fairgrounds. The pavilion architecture resulted from a negotiation between the Peruvian Fair Commissioner and the Foreign Government department of the Fair to include additional features. Further analysis of this building allows for a chronological checklist of decorative additions. These elements, including doors and windows, were intended to broadcast the Peruvian government’s national values within a United States-sponsored space. The Fair’s modern architectural theme provides a contextual perspective on the official intentions of the host country toward Peruvian participation.

The entire complex of structures representing Latin American countries was intended to support the concept of Pan-Americanism. During the 1930s, an emerging perspective toward the distinct character of the Americas as a unified hemisphere influenced content and form of pavilions. A comparative summary of the architectural vocabulary and schematic organization of various Latin American participants at the 1939 NYWF illustrated the broad range of symbolic imagery of Pan-Americanism at the moment.

Architectural Language

The World’s Fair grounds were divided into seven zones: Amusement and Entertainment, Food, Communications and Business Systems, Community interests, Production and Distribution,
Transportation and the International Zone. The plan was structured around several main plazas connected by radiating streets (fig.6).\textsuperscript{41} The overall architectural style of the Fair depended on what Art Deco historians have referred to as “fully realized, functional, pop-modern,\textsuperscript{42}” reminiscent of the Art Deco architecture employed at the Century of Progress Fair in Chicago six years earlier. Much of the skyline was dominated by a plethora of sleek, white buildings, many pavilions and structures incorporating elements of International Style, such as piloti or narrow ribbon windows into the visual language of Art Deco. By the late 1930s, many building façades displayed brutal relief figures and abstract geometric patterning, lending a uniform, administrative quality to many structures.

The architecture of the NYWF formalized a utopian “World of Tomorrow.” Engaging with architecture as a political tool to inspire social betterment and progress, idealistic goals were epitomized by the central exhibitions in the perisphere and trylon structures. In her introduction to the edited volume \textit{Architecture of Great Expositions 1937-1959: Messages of Peace, Images of War}, engineer architect Rika Devos asserts that the developers of exposition architecture at this time were searching “for architectural means that would provide the allies, the foes, the general public and the architectural critics with clues to read political messages that were often finely calibrated.”\textsuperscript{43} World Expositions were popular for decades in Western Europe and the United States, making the wartime interactions of host and participant nations especially significant in terms of indicating broader political allegiances and foreign commerce. The forward-looking theme of the NYWF was developed and refined by cultural critics such as writer

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{42} ibid.}
Lewis Mumford, Harvey Wiley Corbett, an architect who worked on the Century of Progress Fair in Chicago, industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague and architect Robert Kohn.\textsuperscript{44} Historian Robert Rydell notes that despite the conservative approach of Stephen F. Voorhees, head of the design board for the NYWF, Teague’s presence on the board allowed for more experimental “modernist” designs to be considered from Henry Dreyfuss, Raymond Loewy, and Norman Bel Geddes. Geddes’ “Futurama” display at General Motors was the most popular exhibit of the Fair.\textsuperscript{45} Another example of these innovative designs is Dreyfuss’ “Democracy,” a diorama enclosed within the perisphere of an urban space imagined in the year 2039 (figs.7, 8).\textsuperscript{46} Surrounding this central exhibit were pavilions of large U.S. corporations, such as AT&T, Kodak and IBM. The utopian focus of the Fair, in light of the recent Depression and looming war, was further emphasized by the architecture of its buildings; the clean lines and organic curves referenced an imagined architecture of the future. Each structure was tasked with adhering to a newer, “modern” feel that projected architectural aspirations for the future, a future where business and technology played a central role in improving human life.

“The Future of Tomorrow” presented a response to modern progress that was rooted in a utopian and nostalgic vision. Punctuating buildings across the fairground were sculptural programs that worked to connect historical figures and role models within the futuristic theme of the Fair to create a unified national narrative (fig. 9). Situated directly opposite from the trylon and perisphere structure was a towering statue of George Washington by James Earle Fraser that historian Marco Duranti refers to at the Fair as “a comfortable colonial counterpoint to the


\textsuperscript{46}Rydell, “Fairs Between the World Wars,” 92.
anxieties of modern life.”47 Leo Friedlander’s sculptural program of *The Four Freedoms* surrounded smaller ponds on Constitution Way, allegorizing the freedoms allowed by the First Amendment.48 A British visitor to the Fair commented specifically on these sculptures, stating “these muscular plaster symbols are so fully and competitively tough, that they have a sort of *Kraft durch Freude* look about them, as if they were taking part in a muscle-parade at some Nazi rally.”49 The observation is not unfounded. The heavy, almost brutally rendered sculptures and reliefs attached to structures, as seen on the façade of the United States pavilion at the head of the Court of Peace, do bear some semblance to official, propagandistic artworks in Germany at the time (fig.10). The eugenic goals and ordering of bodies within the fairground played an integral role in emphasizing, dictating a vision of a consumer-driven society idealized through thematic architecture at 1939 NYWF. In an attempt to distance themselves from a fractious Europe, the Fair’s theme reflected a Depression-era effort to define a distinctly American cultural identity.50

Along with celebrations of Founding Fathers and idyllic profiles of white, North American families, the Fair’s organizers had increased their interest and attention to the participation of foreign nations. For the organizers of these international displays, Latin American countries and Peru in particular were viewed as key participants, as evidenced by Roosevelt and President Benavides’ actions outlined in the Introduction. A telegram from Roosevelt, Latin American Commissioner to the Fair, to President Prado in the spring of 1940, indicates the vested interest of the Fair organizers in Central and South America, as stated: “To

insure a large showing of [Latin American] countries... would in itself prove of great interest to
visitors should European countries be kept away, the possibility of war in Europe being
foreseen.” Framed as a “next best” alternative to the participation of war-torn European
countries, the NYWF contained the largest number of Latin American national representation in
an United States fair to date. As discussed further in the chapter, scholars have argued that
Latin American countries aligned themselves with either a modern international style or with
native and indigenous motifs. The central positioning of the American nations and the variety of
their national expressions within the International Zone of the Fair points to broader Pan-
American political and industrial concerns based around the authority of the U.S.

Adapting and Inserting Gates and Windows from Paris

At the Fair, one encountered the Peruvian pavilion within the “Government Zone” of
low, white square structures, which occupied a small area in comparison to the overall ground
occupied by the Fair. The building was tucked around a corner from the imposing modernist
structure of the United States pavilion (fig.4) and positioned between the Ecuadorian and
Swedish buildings. As Duranti observes, the Fair “broke with precedent” in placing the foreign
exhibits on the periphery of the grounds, and he argues that the Fair was zoned to center
corporate structures such as the exhibits surrounding the trylon and perisphere. Not only did this
depart from customary zoning of foreign exhibits support the commercial undertones of the Fair,
it also affected the content presented by international participants. As for Peru, the commission
responded to the theme and location of the Fair by submitting a plan for a pavilion that

51 Telegram from E.F. Roosevelt to President Prado, April 22, 1940, Box 51, Folder 21, New York World’s Fair
1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records, Central Files, Government, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New
York Public Library.
showcased the application of “Peruvian” motifs on everyday life, including the display of many industrial artefacts.

Each pavilion along Presidential Roads North and South bordering the Court of Peace was a pre-fabricated structure, provided to participating countries who elected to opt out of designing and constructing their own pavilions (fig.6). The Peruvian government occupied a structure allotted to them by the Fair organizers. A location that served as an exhibition space for national art and industry, the pavilion building was designed by Howard L. Cheney, as was the case with 35 other countries, and the Pan American Union (fig. 11). Correspondence between Manuel B. Llosa, the first Commissioner for the Peruvian Pavilion, and W.H. Standley, Director of Foreign Participation, demonstrates the intention of the former to adapt these spaces and the parameters to achieving the desired structure within the Fair’s pavilion.

The most significant adaptations to the prefabricated pavilion were the addition of a mezzanine level, four stained glass windows and possibly wrought iron entrance gates (figs.12, 13). Typical prefabricated structures bordering the Court of Peace at the NYWF were white, low to the ground, with a spare façade. Each pavilion formed a uniform row, their individual façades and flags leading up the U.S. Pavilion to the head of the Court of Peace. These spaces signaled the nation represented in the building’s interior through a sculptural façade and in some cases, an allegorized statue of a female figure. The Peruvian commission participated in these tropes through the installation of Romano Espinoza Caceda’s bas-relief, to be discussed in the following chapter. Dependent on their location within the Government Zone, Cheney’s pavilions took on flat front or curved façades. In the case of Peru, this two-storied structure was roughly hexagonal and contained two levels (fig.14).

What follows is a discussion of the structural additions to the pavilion, all of which incorporated or referenced pre-Columbian motifs. Luza and the Izcue sisters were invited to be artistic directors for the Peruvian pavilion at the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne in Paris in 1937. Their success and recognition in Europe propelled them to reprise their display on the occasion of the 1939 New York Peruvian pavilion. In keeping with the Izcue’s work, applying decorative elements sourced from Nazca designs reflects the directors’ interest in demonstrating their abilities to construct a national Peruvian display that simultaneously reflected the creative abilities of past and present.

A key similarity between the actual architecture of the Paris and New York pavilions was the insertion of stained glass and wrought iron gates into the entryways and windows of the exhibitions (figs. 12, 13). These works disrupted the clean, administrative lines of the prefabricated pavilions and were an occasion to showcase the nation’s work in domestic design. The maker of these elements is unknown. Securing these objects were among some of the concerns of Manuel B. Llosa in early correspondence between the commissioner and W.H. Standley. Through inquiries with an engineer, it appears these windows were permitted by Standley, evidenced by a photograph of the interior (fig. 14).

In the “General Plan of Presentation” submitted by Llosa to Standley in the planning stages of the pavilion, the report also reveals that the character of the structure was intended to “show the originality of design founded upon the force of the Peruvian motif, and the novelty it

55 Majluf, Elena Izcue: el arte precolombino en la vida moderna, 150
56 W. H. Standley to Wharton Green, Liaison Engineer, April 20, 1938, Box 1501, Folder 4, New York World's Fair 1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records, Central Files, Government, Manuscripts, and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
can give to techniques.”

Objects outside the pavilion followed this framework, but there is little photographic evidence that provides information about specific items. In a photograph of the Peruvian pavilion reprinted in an article on Latin American pavilions, the Bulletin of the Pan American Union, one of the stained glass windows is visible on the far right of the image (fig.14). Symmetrical in form and composition, the rectangular pane was comprised of two stacked central figures, a stylized face and scalloped geometric shape that echoed the sloping lines of the accompanying iron gates. Surrounding the edge of the composition were several figures, some appearing to carry shields with heraldic symbols (fig.12). It is unclear if the windows were visible from the exterior of the pavilion, and I have not found descriptions of the side and rear of the pavilion. However, the image of the interior demonstrates the use of “Peruvian motifs” in decorations, and the integration of these elements into the architecture of the structure, such as the display of a textile and wooden bust in a niche and the neo-Baroque engaged columns framing the pavilion’s interior doorway. While the interior visual program will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the current analysis of the architecture of the Peruvian pavilion provides an opportunity to imagine a unified building.

Additionally, I have not encountered photographic evidence that confirms the iron gates were installed in New York. The shape of the double portal entry to the pavilion, however, suggests a form that could accommodate these doors (fig.11). There were other proposed exterior additions to the architecture of the pavilion that did not appear in the final presentation. These elements were summarized as “national insignias in decorative forms” and two medallions on each side of the iron gate made of plastic or metal. Both of these unrealized additions were

described by the commissioner as, “inspired by pre-Columbian and colonial motifs.” The 1938 proposal sent to W.H. Standley in comparison to the finished pavilions highlights the extensive coordination and correspondence between not only the Peruvian Commissioner and NYWF officials, but also between architects and facilities staff.

The inclusion of a mezzanine level of the pavilion was mentioned in the initial proposal submitted in March 1938 by Llosa and detailed in a memo dated May 1938. Translated by J.S. Adrianzen and referred to in document as translated by a local a “Peruvian architect” living in College Point, NY, this correspondence describes the process of finalizing the design of the pavilion. Taking up 3,200 square feet, the second level was intended to house displays of art, and exhibits of commerce and industry. The Peruvian Commissioner outlined the mezzanine as “U shaped” with stairs at each end and 4.7 meters (15 feet 5 inches) above the first floor. Scattered throughout the memo are subtle references to some of the unknown elements of the pavilion building in New York, such as specifications for windows on the second level that “may be subject to requirements unknown to us” as well as requests for the dimensions of the projecting columns in the space. Also outlined are plans for “murals, pictures and exhibition shelves” to occupy the space between the interior columns. Other features included a library in the “Hall of Honor” and a frieze installed along the ceiling. Existing photographs from the pavilion prove that some of these potential changes to the pre-existing pavilion were realized.

58 ibid.  
62 ibid.
such as the second-level frieze, mural, and shelves, but the presence of a Hall of Honor is unknown (figs. 23, 35, 36).

The initial proposal contains references to gilded plaster bas reliefs of “Peruvian inspiration” that were intended to be installed on the balcony overlooking the first floor of the pavilion. From photographs of the pavilion’s interior, it seems this request was abandoned in favor of a caged railing displaying checkered panels, which appear to be decorated in feathered textile patterns from the Wari period (fig.14).\(^{63}\) Drawings and sketches referencing the panels and other elements have unfortunately not been located at the time of writing. The memo concludes with a stated request that the “architect in charge” attempt to adapt to the plan submitted.\(^{64}\) Overall, the use of ancient and contemporary design expressions resonate with Elena Izcue’s re-working of Pre-Columbian aesthetic tradition, and trouble the dichotomy of modern vs. folk that many Latin American artists and designers were grappling with their attempt to modernize their heritage.

*Constructing America: Latin America at the Fair*

Within the highly ordered schema of the Fair, foreign countries occupied a relatively small space: the host country’s pavilion led the display of nations and the 48 U.S. states held a centralized and prominent location. The Peruvian pavilion’s placement near the U.S. within the overall plan of the Fair supports the already documented importance of the Commission's involvement. The memo detailing proposed changes to the pavilion states “our exhibit must be


\(^{64}\) Memorandum from F. Pardo de Zela to W.H. Standley, May 6, 1939, Box 1501, Folder 3, New York World's Fair 1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records, Central Files, Government, Manuscripts, and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
comparable with that of other countries that occupy a hierarchy relative to ours in the concert of nations,” echoing their role as framing the central placement of the U.S. at the fair.\(^{65}\) Peru participated in the Fair with the same shared interests as the United States organizers and other participants, such as businesses and corporations, who wanted to spotlight the country’s natural resources, such as oil and copper. The U.S government’s 1933 Good Neighbor policy towards countries to the south played a major role in encouraging participation in the NYWF. Amy Spellacy outlines the United States’ Pan-American economic viewpoint of the Western hemisphere; the Good Neighbor policy was meant to “[encourage] a sense of ‘inter-American community’” while continuing to promote the continued economic and political dominance of the United States.\(^{66}\) Greet offers more specific observations in terms of how these politics intersected with the ideology of the Fair, describing an overarching approach as “themes of democracy, peaceful cooperation, and economic and cultural interdependence among culturally distinct American nations pervaded against all aspects of the Fair’s rhetoric and vision.”\(^{67}\)

The Peruvian organizers’ presentation of industrial goods and art objects was the result of the completion of a building for the Fair that fit into formal “community” and ideological parameters. The Peruvian display was bolstered by the country’s central location within the International Zone. On the whole, Latin American participants were granted new visibility by their U.S. hosts within a hierarchy of nations that privileged their role in the U.S. economy at that time. Peru’s total foreign commercial value doubled at this time, in part due to increased


\(^{66}\) Spellacy, “Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor: Geography, Globalism, and Pan-Americanism during the 1940s,” 40n3.

\(^{67}\) Michele Greet, “To New York and Back Again,” 131.
mineral production. Thus, international trade priorities took precedence over the country’s artistic resources.

What follows is a discussion of the schematic organization of countries at the Fair which illustrates the host country’s often biased expectations of Central and South American participation. With the growth of U.S. private interests in trade with Peru came support of the Peruvian-American Association for the pavilion and for the display of valued resources of oil and gold. The most forthright expression of the U.S. “neighborly policy towards Latin America was exemplified by the Pan American building, built by the organization of the same name to include countries from the region unable to afford the cost of their own pavilion. Greet argues that the structure, located opposite the Peruvian pavilion on Presidential Row South, “made little attempt to conceal the United States’ political and commercial agenda for Latin America.”

Before approaching the administrative modernist façade, the viewer was greeted by rows of flags from each nation in the Americas, installed on a concave metal support beam that towered over the heads of visitors (fig. 7). Beyond the entrance was a rarely photographed space that contained a large map of the Americas, illustrating exports from Latin American countries. While the Fair organizers may have intended to provide space for each of these nations to participate, Haiti was the only country to send materials on display, while the Colombian government sent coffee samples. Practical concerns outweighed countries’ willingness to take part in an event like the World’s Fair, thus curtailing Standley and Roosevelt’s efforts to envision Pan America in its entirety.

The Fair visitors touring the Government Zone, strolling around the Lagoon of Nations, would encounter countries who elected to construct their own pavilions at either end of the central court, which included Chile, Argentina Brazil and Venezuela. The International Style architecture of each pavilion aligned these countries with modern trends; paned glass walls, *pilotis* and flat planes of buildings showcased the burgeoning practice of emerging architects, such as Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa, in the case of Brazil (fig.15). These presentations offered a modern vision of nations for visitors, but because of their original designs and footprint were relegated to avenues off the main thoroughfare. By contrast, the remaining six Latin American countries occupied pavilions provided by the Fair and were located within the Court of Peace and near the central figure of the Federal building. In her discussion of Latin American pavilions at the NYWF, Greet recognizes that the emphasis on “native crafts and indigenous heritage,” particularly in the case of the Ecuadorian, Peruvian, and Mexican participations, all of which provided a marked contrast to the elaborate built structures of Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. This dichotomy of modern versus native was ordered within the organization of foreign nations, as countries presenting themes related to their native heritage given a closer physical proximity to the United States.

The pavilions of Ecuador, Peru, and Cuba bracketed the United States building. These dual, curving rows of buildings, each crowned with a flagpole and national flag, reflected official and administrative aesthetics of the International Zone. Cuba and Ecuador’s pavilions were located nearest to the United States structure. Sharing a structural likeness to other pavilions, Ecuador's exterior clay bas-relief by Camilo Egas displayed imagery that referenced the

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country’s pre-industrial history, depicting an anthropomorphic sun and a condor (fig.16). Cuba’s Félix Cabarrocas designed an allegorical bas-relief figure for the pavilion façade. The feminine figure was surrounded by fruits, a fertile imagery reflecting the nation’s agricultural resources (fig.17).\footnote{For more on Cuba’s pavilion, see Temkin, “Cuban Art and Culture In and Around the 1939 New York World’s Fair,” 239-263.} The close physical association of these countries with the United States, together with their display of symmetrical structures, reinforced the sense of dominance of the United States at the head of the International Zone. The Pan-American concept permeating the Fair demonstrated the ongoing attitude toward Latin America as a resource in United States fairs.\footnote{For more on the history of Pan American architecture at nineteenth century world exhibitions, see Gonzalez,“The Birth of Pan American Architecture at Hemispheric Fairs 1884-1901” in Designing Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 19-65.} Newfound focus on corporations at the NYWF were transferred to expectations for Latin American countries, who were given a place on the map to highlight the glorious past and industrial potential of a unified America.

**Conclusion: The Future of Pan America**

The official guidebook to the Fair cites the New York exposition as the most international fair in the “long history of exhibitions.”\footnote{“Government Zone,” 117.} Given that this plethora of foreign exhibitors was given space outside the central zones of the Fair, the writer of the guidebook acknowledges the potential for foreign trade through displays in these pavilions, but ultimately conveys value through an emphasis on the educational elements of the international exhibitions. About the Government Zone, the guidebook states: “here the peoples of the world unite in working towards a common purpose: to set forth their achievements of today and their contributions to the “world of
tomorrow.” The NYWF grounds were structured around the past and present achievements of the United States and its corporations. Within the historical and simultaneously utopian architecture of George Washington monuments and futuristic Art-Deco buildings, nine Central and South American occupied pavilions, as well as the Pan-American Union building. Each country demonstrated a differing type of negotiation with the modern themes and parameters of the Fair. Peru, emphasizing the culture and design inherent in Andean civilizations, chose the strategy to demonstrate their relevance to the current and future marketplace. Incorporating symbols and motifs from the pre-Columbian and Colonial eras into the pavilion’s architecture responded to the Pan-American overtones of the fair. The placement of the building near to the U.S. pavilion, a central focus of the Government Zone, reflected the aspiration for a close trade-based relationship between the two countries.

77 ibid.
Chapter II

Facing the Fair: Romano Espinoza Cáceda’s façade

Introduction

A definite Peruvian note to Peru’s participation in the New York World’s Fair 1939 will be lent to the nation’s unit of the Hall of Nations by the imposing bas-relief over the entrance.78

This type-written statement from a press release, pasted to the back of a photograph of an ink rendering submitted by the Peruvian Commission to the World’s Fair Committee in 1938, introduces more questions than answers. The image, by an unknown artist, portrayed the exterior façade of the Peruvian pavilion (fig.3). What was the anonymous author referring to in citing a “definite Peruvian note” in the façade of the building? How can the qualities of “Peru” be summarized in one bas-relief panel? Investigating this broad claim to “Peruvian” traits involves a close examination of the decorative panel, completed by Peruvian sculptor Romano Espinoza Cáceda. Recognized abroad and in Peru for his work depicting indigenous subjects, Cáceda’s practice and commissions for the NYWF aligned with the nationalistic and industrial qualities of the Fair. The visual qualities of the façade present a negotiation of the Peruvian present and interpretations of the past within a United States-hosted World’s Fair context. Overall, Cáceda’s work is indicative of the Peruvian government’s intention to recall their indigenous and colonial heritage as indicators for Peru’s relevance within the modern world.

The Bas-relief at the Fair

Cáceda’s bas-relief covered almost the entirety of the front of the building that stood

facing inward onto Presidential Row North, bordered by the Ecuadorian and Swiss pavilions (fig.6). As the Peruvian Commission decided on using a provided pavilion, instead of constructing their own (as was the case for Argentina, Brazil, and Chile), the exterior decorative program was the sole opportunity to differentiate their exhibition from the other surrounding nations. A statue of a female figure in the round prominently stood in the front of the curved panel, a flag pole rising from the back of her head that displayed the Peruvian flag. The form of the female figure welcoming fair-goers into national pavilions was a trope used by most international pavilions in the 1939/40 NYWF; footage of the Fair shows a monumental figure integrated into each pavilion on the Court of Peace. Cáceda’s white plaster relief program surrounding the central figure illustrated various perceptions of natural and moral aspects of the country and occupied the entirety of the panel, from its base at the entrance to the lettering at the top of the structure (figs. 3,18). As one drew near to the pavilion, stylized and stoic figures beckoned the visitors’ imaginary, as they were engaging with formalizations of national identity that had been codified by both the host and participating nations.

Official language of F. Pardo de Zela, Acting Commissioner General to the Peruvian Commission, (the Commission would go through three directors by the time the Fair closed) makes a case for the inclusion of Cáceda’s work in a letter to E.F. Roosevelt, Acting Director of Foreign Government Participation, in asking for approval on the façade design. The correspondence states that, “the main object of this decoration is to show the beauty of pre-Columbian American ‘art motifs’ and their application to industry and craft, as well as the rich

79 F. Pardo De Zela, Acting Commissioner General to Admiral William Standley, Director of Foreign Government Participation, July 14, 1938, Box 1501, Folder 4, Government Participation, New York World’s Fair 1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records, Manuscripts, and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, New York, NY. “The Peruvian government has decided not to build a special pavilion, but to participate in the Fair occupying the space already allotted to us in the Hall of Nations.”

heritage of the art of the Americas.”

De Zela’s words support the general theme of the Fair, “Building the World of Tomorrow.” According to an official guide book published in 1939, the subject of the Fair was intended not as a method of looking into the future, but to present a clear view of the time “in preparation for tomorrow.” Setting forth and displaying the achievements and contributions of countries and corporations, the Fair buildings generated an architectural program later deemed by art historians as “Corporation style.” On World’s Fairs generally, historian Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo observes that, “their festival character was, above all, the celebration of the human accomplishment of productive liberty that was epitomized in the veneration of free commerce.” Cáceda’s relief, as qualified by de Zela, conformed to this unifying style. In his text on the 1939/40 NYWF, architecture historian Eugene Santomasso elaborates on “Corporation style,” stating that “the fair’s architecture combined elements of the popular deco style with the traditional arts, and joined them with the devices of industrial design and commercial advertising.” For Peru, the bas-relief imposed on the existing structure of the pavilion allowed for an emphasis on indigenous culture while simultaneously demonstrating these motifs as appealing to foreign markets. For de Zela and the Peruvian Commission these were “an inexhaustible source...to the tentacular art of our epoch.”

Many of the themes

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85 Santomasso, “The Design of Reason: Architecture and Planning at the 1939/1940 New York World's Fair,” 40. The Queens Museum is in Flushing Meadows, Queens and was originally constructed as the New York City pavilion at the 1939/40 NYWF.
illustrated in the bas-relief were, in fact, sourced from previous and contemporary Peruvian pavilions.

Manuel B. Llosa, the first appointed Commissioner to the Peruvian pavilion at the New York World’s Fair presented still other allegorical qualities in a letter to E. F. Roosevelt; “the façade represents Peru and its three principal regions: Coast, Sierra and Jungle.”

The three Andean peaks occupying the central part of the composition tower above waves, parallel ripples symbolizing the coast (fig.22). Jungle foliage takes up the rest of the background, while the sun’s rays reach to the top and edge of the sculptural program. On each side of the sun stands a grouping of bodies, the two crowds representing qualities human components of the country.

In the lower left quadrant of the bas-relief is a group personifying “Sciences and Arts.” The young man in the immediate foreground, nude save for a cloth draping across his front, is an embodiment of Science. Behind him is an elderly man standing for Law and Order, while Art is represented by a female nude as the “natural feminine form, is most attractive.”

Other groupings in the composition near the earth are children, signaling future generations, standing behind a “primitive woman,” who is rendered hugging a jug, symbolizing the country’s archeology. On the lower right is a group of workers, typifying “toil in its different forceful aspects: the field, the machine shop, the mine; the labourer and the peasant.” Each one holds a tool in their hand relating to these aspects, such as an ax and a plow. The active workers on the right and the passive allegorized bodies on the left mark the work as publicity, as each of the values allegorized is re-presented again within the interior of the pavilion. Here, industrial

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89 ibid. In a photograph of a mock-up sent to the Committee in New York for approval, an animal head, perhaps of a horse is visible, although it is unclear from photographs of the pavilion if this element was included in the final program.
products, ancient textile and pottery, contemporary painting, sculpture, and a bust of the country’s president were all on display (fig. 23).

Cáceda’s façade demonstrates Peru, amidst its geographic wonders, engaging with European ideals of Science, Law, and Art, while extolling the present reality with the section devoted to labor. The figures appear diverse in age and gender and devoted to laboring for their country, as their efforts literally cause the sun to rise and the landscape to flourish. De Zela intended this façade as a demonstration the “rich heritage of the art of the Americas,” but it seems that the direct representation of pre-Columbian forms was left for the objects inside the pavilion, while Cáceda’s work interpreted these values in a style more cohesive to the United States-hosted, utopic and modernist aesthetic of the fairground overall.

Cáceda’s “Gateway of the Sun:” Antecedents and Contemporaries

Approaching the 25-foot tall panel, a World’s Fair attendee was confronted by the statue and flagpole; behind these vertical elements the relief towered above the two entrance portals. Containing a half circle with solar rays “signifying the cosmic force,” while alluding to an original divinity of Peru (figs. 3,18), the forms in Cáceda’s bas-relief were, according to de Zela, intended to evoke similarities to the “Temple of the Sun at Tiahuanaco,” an ancient city built on the shore of Lake Titicaca. Arranged in a manner where figures surrounding the central deity or sun-form are in a position of deference, kneeling (in the case of Cáceda’s work) or rendered in hieratic scale in the ancient portal, these replicated motifs included the sun, tools of

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prosperity, and worshippers. Now located in present-day Bolivia, as national borders shifted over time, the structure de Zela was probably referring to is the *Gateway of the Sun* at Tiwanaku, as there is no physical Temple of the Sun near Lake Titicaca. The *Gateway of the Sun*, located on the southern shores of Lake Titicaca, follows de Zela’s geographic placement and descriptions (fig.19 a,b). The motifs of this ancient site were also replicated at least 10 years prior at the Peruvian Pavilion at the *Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla*, making a case for their continued use by the government for their participation in the World’s Fair.

Designed by the Spanish sculptor Manuel Piqueras Cotolí, the neo-Baroque façade of the 1929 pavilion in Spain simultaneously recalled past and present through Cotolí’s engagement with pre-Columbian and viceregal architectural forms and symbols. The entrance features a close replica of the central deity figure carved into a portal entrance at Tiahuanaco (fig.20). *Gateway of the Sun*, from the 4th century CE, was excavated by European explorers in the 19th century and contains a weather deity, Thunupa, centrally placed above the portal.93 In the 1929 Spanish rendition, the representation of Thunupa was incorporated into the Spanish Baroque façade and situated directly above the entrance. At Tiahuanaco, 30 faces in profile border the central figure, arranged symmetrically, referring to the days of each solar month. Remnants of the profile facing figures remain in the 20th century façade in Spain, integrated into the edges of the undulating pediment. Replacing the body of the Thunpa figure with the Peruvian coat of arms, incorporated into other exterior decorations were the insignias of Spanish nobility from Lima, surrounded with abstracted, pre-Columbian animal forms.94 Cotolí’s pavilion for *Exposición Iberoamericana de*  

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93 Anthropologist Alan Kolata describes the depiction as: “most likely an ancient representation of Thunupa, the Aymara weather god. Standing on a pyramidal structure, the figure holds a sling in one hand and a atlatl in the other, as warfare and agriculture are reciprocal metaphors, each simultaneously alluding to another.” Kolota, Alan K. “The Flow of Cosmic Power: Religion, Ritual and the People of Tiwanaku,” in *Tiwanaku: Ancestors of the Inca*, ed. Margaret Young-Sanchez and Sergio J. Chavez, (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2004),124.

Sevilla was intended and organized around the relationship between Spain and its former colonies; the syncretic nature of the neo-colonial architecture indicated the perceived fusion between Spanish and pre-Hispanic cultures.

Cáceda’s bas-relief for the Peruvian Pavilion at the 1939 World’s Fair relates to the Gateway of the Sun in ways that are far less literal than the rendition presented a decade earlier in Spain. The symmetrical relationship between Cáceda’s façade and the ancient portal are reflected in the solar rays and mountain peak; the sun remains the central point of focus, its rays taking on the exaggerated form of Thunupa’s crown, reaching across the curved surface. The country’s name was also brought into play in this symmetrical arrangement, as two of the four letters occupied each side of the flagpole. While the Gateway displays one portal for entry, the building provided to the Peruvian government in New York had two entries, breaking with the similarity to the original form.

As in Spain, Cáceda’s composition was realized as a relief, using a subtractive method of carving into the stone. The geometric motifs illustrated at Tiahuanaco were replaced in the 1939 relief with naturalistic, allegorical figures. However, Cáceda’s façade’s most striking difference from ancient and neo-colonial structures in Peru and Seville is the transformation of the central figure. The central stylized, abstracted deity now takes on the form of statue of a woman, depicted in a naturalistic manner removed from pre-Columbian forms. These figures were a common occurrence installed outside government pavilions. Presented as part of a larger allegorical program, the generalized personification of Peruvian resources indicated the commercial focus of the NYWF.

“...Al analizar la fachada contrapuesta vemos el escudo de Lima en relieve como referente principal, junto a los escudos nobiliarios de la nobleza española en Lima...”
Another noteworthy comparison is the pavilion constructed under the supervision of Commissioner Manuel B. Llosa at the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco.\footnote{Photograph of the exterior of the Peruvian Pavilion, Golden Gate International Exposition, October 1939, BANC PIC 1992.034--ALB, Album 5, Snap Shooting Around the Golden Gate International Exposition, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.} On view concurrent to the New York pavilion, the deviating styles of the two pavilions highlight the shifting focus of world’s fairs towards commercial concerns. Constructed in order to celebrate the opening of the Golden Gate and San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, the grounds were constructed on artificial land in the center of the Bay called Treasure Island. Deemed a “Western Wonderland” in an official guidebook for the event, the foreign nations took up pavilions behind the Arts Building and the central exhibits framing the Court of the Universe.\footnote{Golden Gate International Exposition on San Francisco Bay (San Francisco: Borden Printing Co., 1938), 27.} The architecture of the event was officially referred to as “structural pageantry,” demonstrating the role of these nations as attraction, a quality that had been assigned to corporations at the New York Fair.\footnote{ibid.} Peru was one of 10 Latin American countries in the “Latin American Court,” signaling a difference in the overall organization of the Golden Gate International Exposition versus the NYWF, where countries intermingled within the Government Zone as opposed to being categorized by nationality.

Peru’s pavilion in San Francisco occupied a notably smaller space than in its representation in New York and placed visual emphasis on folk traditions (fig. 25). A three-tiered structure sat atop a heavy, possibly wooden doorway. The central figure sourced from the Gateway of the Sun above the lintel relates to iconography utilized in much Peruvian official and exposition-related architecture. Above the deity, two heads, possibly feline, are visible. Below, framing the entrance, are a set of double doors. Contrary to the openwork iron doors in the Peruvian pavilion in Paris, these patterns fit tightly into eight squares containing a variety of
geometric patterns. Some display a similar stepped pattern of the overall building and the molding on the façade, while other sections more closely resemble the interior friezes in the 1937 Paris pavilion. Another notably visible difference is the typography of the country names on the pavilions. From photographic evidence it appears these names were regulated in New York, while San Francisco Latin American pavilions display a range of typographic styles. Each of these structures serves to fulfill expectations from the host city to communicate the message of the fair; for San Francisco this means pageantry, while in New York organizers were seeking to illustrate modern life.

The Incan Sun Virgin and Cornucopia as Nationalized Symbols

Complicating the connection to Peru’s archaeologically rich heritage and the composition’s resemblance to the Sun Gate at Tiwanaku is the large sculpture of a woman, also by Cáceda, welcoming the visitor into Peru’s pavilion. The statue’s plaited hair connotes her indigenous heritage as do the folds of fabric rendered in stone, that fall from her shoulders to the ground. The hem of her garment is overtaken by a massive amount of coins spilling from a horn-like vessel. These coins take up about a quarter of the figure’s height, and spill out of their container through a round opening adorned with an abstract motif.

Standing centrally within the bas-relief composition and two feet in front of it, de Zela argues that the woman is an allegorical rendering of “the proverbial wealth of Peru’s natural resources.” The rays of the sun behind her mimic the forms converging around the head of the deity carved into stone at Tiwanaku, her form taking the place of the abstractly rendered god (figs. 3, 18, 5). The deity’s frontal post and ornamented attire have been replaced with a naturalized female figure, clad in flowing robes. In her left hand she holds “a horn of plenty,
from which massive gold coins pour forth,” signaling the material riches of the nation.\(^9^8\) As the figures within the panel are referred to as “worshippers,” the woman connects present to past in taking on the role of Tunupa, the weather god illustrated within the *Sun Gate* at Tiwanaku.\(^9^9\) However, the symbols of warfare and agriculture have been replaced by the massive cornucopia containing an even larger amount of wealth. The coins certainly are “abundant,” as described in a letter from Llosa to Roosevelt, the multitude of coins threatening to fall on visitors’ heads, save for the plinth the statue perches on.\(^1^0^0\) In her brief discussion of the pavilion, Greet argues that Cáceda’s work is an illustration of “unique American traditions continuing to flourish in the face of modernization.”\(^1^0^1\)

Expanding on Peruvian engagement with a mix of pre-Columbian and European imagery, art historian Fernando Villegas posits that the allegorical figures created by Peruvian artists of the early 20th century “united past and present.”\(^1^0^2\) This view of history conflated with; a firmly contemporary ground is illustrated in the iconography of the native woman and the “horn of plenty.” Seemingly a requirement in every foreign pavilion, the recurrence of these motifs in Cáceda’s figure serve as indicators of Peruvian culture to the outsider’s gaze. The indigenous woman and cornucopia as a symbol for Peru dates back to the colonial era. In her text *Vision, Race, Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, anthropologist Deborah Poole sets forth her conception of an “Inca Operatic” in a discussion of foreign plays and books containing indigenous and Inca characters. French interest in the tragedy of the Inca conquest

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\(^1^0^0\) Llosa to Roosevelt, March 7, 1939, New York World's Fair 1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records.


peaked in the 18th century, as demonstrated in the 1747 publication of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* ([*Letters from a Peruvian Woman*]) by Françoise de Graffigny. This fictional exchange of letters between a Peruvian princess and sun virgin Zilia and her lover, Aza, chronicle her journey to and observations of France after her abduction from the Temple of the Sun by Spanish conquistadors, and subsequent rescue by French pirates.¹⁰³ Poole posits that the female characters in these narratives contained for their readers a “sensual discovery in the desirable yet aloof, similar yet different figure of the Incan sun virgin.”¹⁰⁴ In an illustration from an 1819 version of the text, the moment of abduction from the Temple of the Sun is illustrated (fig.24). Within the central image, the bare-footed, dark-haired princess is grabbed by a Spanish conquistador, while a civilian (presumably a French pirate) prepares his weapon.

The similarities and differences between the 19th century illustration of Zilia and Cáceda’s sculpture highlight the continued engagement with the colonial trope of the Incan princess. Cáceda’s rendering of a Peruvian woman endows her with traits associated with Andean indigeneity, such as plaited hair and a broad nose, as opposed to the ethnically ambiguous Zilia (fig. 5). The iconography surrounding the central image of the 1819 illustration of her abduction contains symbols of Peruvian conquest, such as a snake wearing a crown, a conquistador’s helmet, and most noticeable, a sack of gold that Cáceda’s 1939 cornucopia nearly replicates. Illustrating the horn of plenty and the reference to the Temple of the Sun with in Graffigny’s text demonstrate these two elements as indicative of the perceived wealth, especially in gold, of the indigenous Peruvian cultures. Further cementing this motif as an icon that recalls a heritage of national prosperity is the Peruvian flag (fig. 21). Within the registers of the central

¹⁰⁴ Poole, “Chapter Two,” 43 n. 46.

“In Inca society, the sun virgins or acllas were cloistered women who lived in a special place called the acllawasi (‘house of the acllas’).”
The symbol of the horn of plenty, first used in a colonial context, was incorporated into national representation upon Peru’s independence from Spain in 1820. Cáceda’s engagement with the symbol further serves as an act of re-appropriation by the host culture. The transformation of the Inca princess into an allegory for a wealth of natural resources reflects further the country’s intent to subvert and employ colonial constructions for international recognition and national benefit, or at least for the benefit of their U.S. hosts.

Cáceda and the Peruvian Art World

Within the history of early 20th century Peruvian art movements, Cáceda’s sculptures and subject matter are viewed as decidedly standing against the national academy, the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (ENBA) and its director, Jose Sabogal. Leaving the country for New York in 1914, Cáceda eventually moved to Paris where his sculptures were exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants. His success abroad led to the artist’s participation in national pavilions for Peru; aside from the New York façade, Cáceda’s statue of Manco Cápac, the founder of the Inca empire, in the Peruvian Pavilion at the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne (1937) in Paris, France, was awarded the Grand Prix (fig.11).

Upon his return to Peru in 1935, Cáceda was a revered national artist. Featured alongside with other artists from the ’39 pavilion in an article published in Lima addressing the need to reform art schools in Peru, the artist stated that for him, the isolation of artists is

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105 The vicuña stands for “freedom, national pride and heroism. The second quartering has a cinchona tree, the bark of which is used to make quinine. Finally, the bottom half of the shield displays a cornucopia from which spill gold and silver coins, symbolic of the nation’s mineral wealth.” Whitney Smith “Flag of Peru,” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., April 18, 2016. https://www.britannica.com/topic/flag-of-Peru.
inconceivable.\textsuperscript{108} The artist argued for the expansion of arts education available in Peru, echoing the intentions of his contemporaries to decentralize the role of ENBA and expand a national idea of art. Participating and producing work for an event like the NYWF demonstrates the overall success of Cáceda and his contemporaries in steering the Peruvian government away from images produced by the Academy.

In an 1952 interview, Cáceda was asked to speak about the development of a modern Peruvian art. The artist narrates for the interviewer, Eduardo Moll, a timeline of national artistic development. He speaks about ancient Peruvian art as a “marvelous creation,” and cites colonial art as Peruvian, but with a “European spirit.” In reference to modern art, he advocates for the necessity to retain outside, European influences in order to be considered authentically Peruvian.\textsuperscript{109} It becomes clear throughout the interview that Cáceda is concerned that contemporary Peruvian art may enable itself to communicate its qualities as a cross-semination of both indigenous and European colonial styles. The artist’s use of neo-colonial visual tropes functioned to legitimize Peruvian art and subjects within the Euro-North American dominated art world, and also resonated with his own artistic viewpoints advocating for the expansion of styles and sources for art-making in Peru.

Conclusion: A Composition of the Past and for the Future

Returning to the press release quote taped to the back of Cáceda’s drawing for the façade of the Peruvian Pavilion, the “Peruvian qualities” alluded to in the text showcased European

\textsuperscript{108} “Varios artistas.”

\textsuperscript{109} “Reportaje a Romano Espinoza Cáceda,” interview by Eduardo Moll, Semanario Peruano 1952: Con Las Noticias Que Hacen La Historia (Lima, Perú), 6, no. 42 (October 20, 1952,) np. “El arte peruano antiguo es una maravillosa creación de estilo decorativo propio, en el que han adaptado sus observaciones de la naturaleza, expresándolos en objetos de uso doméstico...El arte colonial es peruano, por haberse desarrollado aquí, pero contiene su natural espíritu europeo. El moderno trata de establecer la fisonomía peruana, pero no todavía con influencias ajenas como para poder dominarlo un verdadero arte peruano.”
artistic conventions, while recalling the symbol of the horn of plenty. Formalized as a sign of wealth during the Colonial and Neo-Colonial eras, in the case of Cáceda’s façade, the cornucopia was combined with a figure to serve as a symbol of modern capital. Motifs associated with indigeneity from the Gateway of the Sun were present throughout the history of Peru’s participation in world exhibitions. The artist’s modernized pre-Columbian imagery in the 1939/1940 façade reflects broader trends in Peruvian fair architecture, as evidenced in the Peruvian pavilion façades from Seville and San Francisco. The commercial aspects of natural resources and material wealth are a focus of Cáceda’s program. They created hybridity, employing Peruvian iconography deriving from the ancient and colonial eras to communicate their offerings of resources, such as copper, gold, and zinc, that were becoming essential staples in the fast growing modern industry. In world exhibitions such as the New York World’s Fair, “nations were imbued simultaneously with a recognizable and acceptable national uniqueness and an approved cosmopolitanism and modernity.” Through its engagement with recognized signs of Peru, rendered in art-deco style that had been commercialized for the Fair, Cáceda’s bas-relief functioned as an advertisement for the constructed microcosm of Peru that lay behind the pavilion walls.

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Chapter III

Officializing the Avant-Garde: Peruvian Painting and Sculpture at the Fair

Introduction

There is little documentation of the paintings and sculptures on view in the Peruvian pavilion, but secondary sources confirm that the 1939 display in New York differed from the 1937 display in Paris, where scholars have noted Jose Sabogal and his “group” presented work.111 A grouping of framed paintings and other two-dimensional works are visible in photographs of the space (fig. 27). In comparing installation images from each pavilion, visible in images of both is sculpture. A male figure in a triumphant pose, his arms clasped above his head with one leg extended back was installed on the first and second floors of the Paris and New York Peruvian pavilions (figs. 28,29). The work has not been attributed, but does support written evidence that some artworks were on view in both the U.S. and France. In constructing a checklist of objects on view, I propose to consider three artists who participated in the pavilion; Francisco Laso, Carmen Saco, and Francisco Gonzalez Gamarra. Focusing on a selection of works and the history of these artists constructs an imagined narrative of the artwork on view in the pavilion. The paintings and sculptures on view amidst displays of textiles and industry were intended to showcase Peruvian “culture, social development and possibilities for the future.”112 The focus on the cultural capital and modern advancement of the country was also evident in the “workers restaurant” installed in the pavilion. A social program of President Benavides, these

dioramas, coupled with paintings, textiles, and ancient objects portrayed Peruvian heritage as integral to modern development, establishing a relationship between the development of nationalism and modernism. This particular strand of nationalism was dependent on the ancient history of Peru and the image of the indigenous subject to signify and provide historical evidence for the modern advancements of the nation.

A useful point of comparison is another occasion for the display of Peruvian art at the Fair. Examining a painting of an “Indian” woman on view by Jose Sabogal in the IBM building in relation to the works on view in the national pavilion expose developments between the indigenismo movement and the Peruvian government. During the 11-year presidency of Augusto Leguía in Peru, the Indian majority was incorporated into the main currents of the nation’s activities, such as increased mining. Under Benavides this population was bolstered as a key player in the Peruvian economy. With the development of indigenismo discourses in the Andean region during this period, the work created by artists and placed in international contexts, such as the World’s Fair, was in constant negotiation with Latin American art movements and Europe and U.S.-based expectations.

*Francisco Laso and Peruvian Pavilions Abroad*

Natalia Majluf has argued that first instance of Latin American art on display in an international context occurred at the 1855 Universal Exposition in Paris, illustrating the history of integrating Latin American art and commerce. Peru was represented only in the fine arts section, and one work from the country was notably reproduced as an engraving in many local
newspapers. Painted specifically for the exposition, Francisco Laso executed *The Inhabitant of the Cordillera of Peru*. A figure wearing black fills the frame and holds in his hands a pre-Columbian object (fig. 30). The fine arts section of the New York exhibition is listed as containing works by Laso and is referred to as an “old master” in materials submitted by the Peruvian Commissioner to the 1939 NYWF publicity department. No other documentation is known about the paintings on view. Looking to Laso’s practice and *The Inhabitant of the Cordillera of Peru* as a case study of the work of this artist made for world exhibitions within the timeline of the 1939 Peruvian pavilion reveals a continued negotiation with indigeneity in constructing and presenting a novel national identity.

Envisioning this work in New York aligns with the presentation of pre-Columbian motifs and history discussed previous chapters. Fine Arts in the pavilion were installed on the mezzanine level, the oversized canvas could have been one of many paintings punctuating other displays of ancient art and industrial products. In *The Inhabitant of the Cordillera of Peru*, the figure holds out a ceramic pot depicting a bound prisoner, similar in form to the Moche ceramics also on view in the pavilion. Majluf offers an analysis of the object that connects the visible wear on the surface to a “rupture with Peru’s ancient past, which can now be represented only in the form of a ruin.” Confronting the viewer from the grasp of the central figure, the object has been interpreted as an allegory of Indian oppression. This work, included in Peru’s first international exhibition was criticized by Parisian viewers as lacking an “authentic” language it its representation of purely pictorial and abstract space. A work by Laso on view in 1939 offers a rebuttal to historied outsider criticism. The artist is now part of the national canon and

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113 Natalia Majluf, “‘Ce n’est pas le Pérou,’ or, the Failure of Authenticity: Marginal Cosmopolitans at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855,” *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1997): 870.
114 Majluf, “‘Ce n’est pas le Pérou,’” 876.
115 ibid.
116 ibid.
this work particularly resonates with the history of the Indian subject as a preferred national image for Peru.

Trained as a painter in Europe, Lazo's practice departed from the genres of the picturesque and costumbrisa that were prevalent in Peru in the mid-19th century. Instead, the artist attempted to portray what was viewed as the present condition of the Indian. By continuing to exhibit an artist named as inauthentic for a foreign audience, the Peruvian Commission remained committed to the national significance of the work. However, the subject of Laso’s work simultaneously conformed to the Latin American regionalism that ordered displays at the Fair, bolstering the presence of other modern and ancient objects in the pavilion.

The Local and International Circulation of Carmen Saco’s Sculptures

Laso’s fusion of past and present illustrated in the allegorical figure of The Inhabitant of the Cordillera of Peru, persisted throughout the pavilion, and particularly resonated through the themes in Cáceda’s bas relief and Carmen Saco’s sculptures. Carmen Saco, (1882-1948) a sculptor and painter born in Peru, was educated at ENBA. Of all the artists with work in the pavilion, she is most closely aligned with the official indigenist discourse of the Academy, and yet, her history and role in the pavilion offers a divergent narrative from other artists in the Academy. After finishing her studies in 1926, Saco traveled throughout Europe on a grant from President, Augusto Leguía. Many artists from Latin American countries were exhibiting and working in Paris at this time, and Saco was no exception; her sculptures were featured in four exhibitions in the city in two years. Upon returning to Peru, she was the first women to exhibit sculpture in Lima in 1931. A decade later, she joined the board of the state-sponsored National
Association of Artists, Writers and Intellectuals of Peru. An outspoken advocate for improving women’s rights in the country, Saco wrote and circulated petitions to reform existing civil codes that limited female autonomy. Saco’s practice, writings, and radical views on reforming the socio-political landscape of Peru were often in contrast with the nationalistic framework surrounding her works displayed abroad.

The artist was strongly impacted by her visit to Moscow in 1927 while in Europe, and images of her work can be found among published accounts of her travels in Amauta, a magazine edited by Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui. A prolific figure within Peruvian history, Mariátegui was involved in several publications advocating for workers’ rights in Peru. Amauta, founded in 1926, contained content from other Latin American artists as well as international contributors: its editors goal was to inform and connect its local readers to global networks of art, poetry, and theory. Harper Montgomery’s chapter in The Mobility of Modernism discussing Amauta outlines the characteristics of visual art presented in the publication; the range of artists and objects reproduced reveal a shift in the “changing perceptions of class, race and gender that allowed for women, craftspeople and Indians to be valued producers of culture.”

Six photographs of sculptures and a drawing by Saco were reproduced in a 1928 issue of Amauta (figs. 31,32) providing visible evidence of this shift. Along with a short summary by Ricardo Florez of the artist’s return from Europe, the pages illustrating a range of maquettes and single figure works provide an impression of Saco’s practice. Focusing on indigenous and working-class subjects, in the maquette for Los campesinos featured on the article’s title pages, figures of both sexes are

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117 “Autobiographical Facts about the Artist Carmen Saco of Lima, Peru,” March 29, 1941, Artist file: miscellaneous uncataloged material, Museum of Modern Art Library, Museum of Modern Art, New York. In materials prepared for Lincoln Kirstein at MoMA, Saco’s career, major exhibitions and publications are detailed, as well a hand-written observation that she is well-educated in many techniques.
shown seated, their bodies becoming part of the solid form supporting them. The existing image does not illustrate the work in its entirety, but visible around the figures are baskets and bundles of fruit and other goods. Modeled in what appears to be stone or wood, this sculptural grouping visually recognized the contribution of local farmers and agriculture to the nation. *Los campesinos* can be viewed as a reference for the inclusion of wooden sculptures by Saco in New York.

Florez’s text describes Saco’s practice as a partial reaction against cultural authority of Lima, which had been strongly influenced by the French and British following the country’s independence in 1821, and suggesting that she “doesn’t pretend to please the Londoners or the Parisians.”\(^{119}\) Her sculptures rendered in a sometimes heavy, roughly hewn style would have been in stark contrast with the 19th century standards of art making. Other works illustrated in *Amauta* depict two busts, additional “revolutionary” maquettes, and a fragment of an oil painting. Her subjects of “the Indian, the creole, the national” are cited by the writer as the reason for her inclusion in *Amauta* and indicate her involvement with *indigenismo* thinkers who advocated for the advancement of opportunities for the indigenous population.\(^{120}\) The radicalism of the views published in *Amauta* had dimmed by 1939 under the presidency of Manuel Prado y Ugarteche. Subjects depicted by Saco reinforce the state absorption of the Indian and working class subject of the past as a symbol of Peruvian nationhood in producing culture for a world exhibition and further validated the use of this imagery in an international context.

There is documentation of Saco’s work on view in the New York pavilion, but no images of her work installed have been found. Documented as working with Inca themes, but not

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\(^{119}\) Ricardo Florez, “Carmen Saco,” *Amauta*, May/June 1928, 10-11. In this same issue, Saco authored on article on Spanish writer Ramón Gómez de la Serna, signaling the artist’s interdisciplinary involvement in the avant-garde both in Europe and Latin America.

\(^{120}\) ibid.
exclusively, she also engaged with allegorical and decorative subjects and motifs. In an international context, Saco’s work was frequently associated with indigenous themes and works such as *Manco Capac and Mama Oclaa*. Noted for the strength and authority in her work, these sculptures in reference to the founders of the Inca empire were featured in a 1926 solo exhibition at the Association Paris-Amérique Latine in France. In her discussion of this exhibition, Greet summarizes Saco’s work and concludes that Parisian reviewers sought out native themes in Saco’s work in attempting to identify “Latin American” qualities, defining the region “in terms of its pre-Spanish past, rather than its modern post-colonial present.” These attitudes and expectations about Latin American art in Europe and the U.S. at the time provide a context surrounding the unknown works by the artist in the 1939 pavilion.

The frequent display of Saco’s work portraying the Indian subject in Europe and the Americas indicates a friction between the artist’s political views and the occasions when her work was framed in a national context. Her engagement and depiction of both the present population and figures of pre-Columbian history departed from other *indigenismo* artists and thinkers who preferred to focus solely on the present condition of the indigenous populations. The international pavilions at the Fair bolstered regionalist views of artwork that reinforced the generalizations that Saco worked hard to oppose in her practice, undermining and obscuring the specific social circumstances that formed the context of her work.

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122 Michelle Greet, “Paris,” in *Transatlantic Encounters Latin American Artists in Paris Between the Wars*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 75. The author also notes the absence of published images of Saco’s work.
Paintings by two Peruvian artists, Francisco Gonzalez Gamarra and Jose Sabogal, depicting a similar subject an “Indian woman,” were on view in different locales within the fairground. Gonzalez Gamarra exhibited several canvases in the Peruvian pavilion, such as a version of this untitled watercolor figure (fig.33). Sabogal’s La mujer del Varayoc was included as part of the “Contemporary Art of Seventy Nine Countries” Exhibit in Gallery of Science and Art, held in the Business Systems and Insurance building (fig.8). The inclusion of these artists within the two displays reveals the transformation of indigenous discourse in the Andean region in the late 1930s. Greet names this period of indigenism as “sapped of its subversive power,” a sentiment that holds true when imagining the illustrated works on view within the constructed, utopic environment of the NYWF. The themes in the paintings and sculptures on view in the pavilion are entrenched in questions of national image and the role of the Indian, past and present. The dual canvases of Gonzalez Gamarra and Sabogal further complicate the interaction of indigenismo and the space of a commodified world exhibition. Simultaneously representing Peru in international and business-sponsored contexts, these works reflect developments within the Peruvian art world that are ultimately overshadowed by the nationalist and commerce-leaning tone of the Fair.

Installed on the interior walls of the circular pavilion, the International Business Machine (IBM) exhibition “Contemporary Art of Seventy Nine Countries” was an aptly named display containing a variety of paintings. IMB tasked representatives from each country with an outpost to request that “local art authorities” submit a work to represent their nation. Various nations, including Haiti, Sweden, Indonesia and Peru, each submitted work ranging from landscapes, cityscapes, portraits and genre paintings. Together, the canvases communicated the far reaching
interest and influence of the information technology company. For Peru, a work by Jose Sabogal was selected to represent the nation in this context.

The director of ENBA in Lima at the time, Sabogal often depicted indigenous subjects and was heavily influential on disseminating indigenismo discourse in Peru in the first half of the 20th century. The painting on view, La mujer del Varayoc (The Woman from Varayoc), portrays an Indian woman, the wife of the mayor or chief illustrated in a companion painting entitled Vayaroc of Chincheros. Facing forward, the figure confronts the viewer with her arms crossed, two braids framing her outward gaze (fig. 34). Standing barefoot on the ground, illustrated in the background are rolling hills in a range of colors, a village nestled into the lower third of the canvas. The sloping hills mimic the convex shapes of the woman’s dress and the billowy blue clouds. Topping the composition is the figure’s red montera, a traditional hat from the region introduced by the Spanish.123 In her analysis of this body of Sabogal’s work, Hispanic literature scholar Mónica González García defines the totemic face of the figure as a sign of the ascent of images illustrating the “dignified Indian” into national imagery.124 The exhibition format of the IBM pavilion enforced the typical and characteristic, embedding Indigenism within the Pan-American framework of the Fair. As Indigenism began to lose its status as a progressive, artistic phenomenon in Peru, it was interpreting outside of the country as a display of ethnic identity.125 Sabogal’s work at the Fair depicted an essentialized Peruvian indigeneity, represented by a single figure in the landscape. However the figure’s bare feet indicate that she is outside of the intellectual world of indigenismo discourse of artists such as Sabogal who advocated for her representation.

125 Greet, “To New York and Back Again,” 141.
The presence of artworks by Francisco González Gamarra in the New York Peruvian pavilion are noted in primary and secondary sources.\textsuperscript{126} Entering the pavilion through the neo-Baroque portal, a visitor turning to the right upon entering the central space on the ground floor would be met with an oversized canvas of a singular figure. A watercolor study by the artist closely parallels the composition (figs. 28, 33). The untitled work illustrates a woman wearing traditional clothing in profile, her face turned slightly to glance at the viewer. Wearing a layered skirt of blue and pink, a light blue cloak stretches across the back of her head and meets at a point on her torso. Secured by a flat, patterned hat, she holds in her hands a textured, multi-colored cord, the white tassels dangling near to the hem of her dress. Unlike Sabogal’s composition of a similar subject, the woman occupies a plane-less space, her body taking up much of the page. Noticeable differences between these two works are the details and embellishments in Gonzalez Gamarra’s work. Wearing pointed, European style shoes, her arm is sheathed in a sleeve that ends in a buttoned cuff. These elements of the woman’s dress point to the neo-colonial reality of fashion and costume in Peru, as textiles and styles were imported throughout the colonial and independent periods. The composition’s lack of background information recalls the visual organization of a costume plate. Sabogal’s figure, while also wearing a garment influenced by European styles, is contrastingly depicted in a timeless, untouched landscape. Looking to the writings of Francisco González Gamarra sheds further light on the orientation of the artist against the authority of Sabogal and ENBA and the counter-narrative presented in the paintings on view in the New York pavilion. For a visitor to the Fair,

the qualities of the Peruvian nation assigned to each of these canvases provided a view of the
nation personified by the Indian or indigenous subject, regardless of the artist’s motives.

Artists whose works were on view in the pavilion, such as Francisco González Gamarra,
Romano Espinoza Cáceda, and Carlos More rejected the dogmatic orientation of ENBA that
promoted indigenismo ideology and criticized the “lack of promotional framework for the
development of Peruvian plastic arts.” Definitive differences in the orientation of González
Gamarra to Sabogal and his followers are outlined in an 1937 issue of the publication El
Comercio. In his text “Teoría del arte peruano en forma de decálogo,” (The Ten Commandments
of the Theory of Peruvian Art,) the artist advocated for a national art that was for and by
Peruvian artists, and not political or extremist. His clear opposition to ENBA is also discussed
by the artist in a 1935 interview. González Gamarra laments the lack of exhibiting “free artists,”
from outside the academy. He argues for artists to exhibit locally, nationally, and internationally,
continuing that only artistic exchange makes possible the creation of a set of national art
features. González Gamarra’s paintings and mural were installed in the pavilion at a time
when indigenismo art was becoming more conservative and engrained in Peruvian national
ideology.

Leaving Peru for over fifteen years, Gonzalez Gamarra studied art abroad in New York
and Paris. Before participating in the Fair, he exhibited at the Hispanic Society in New York and
at the Palace Vendome in Paris. These experiences abroad are manifested in the artist’s position
that national art must be opened up beyond the Academy. Featuring Gonzalez Gamarra in the

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127 Ricardo Kusunoki, Synopsis of “Varios artistas opinan que es absolutamente necesario reformar los Institutos de
arte en el Perú,” Documents of 20th-century Latin American and Latino Art, Accessed May 10, 2018,
128 Francisco Gonzalez Gamarra, “Teoría del arte peruano en forma de decálogo,” El Comercio, November 14,
1937, 4.
129 “Varios artistas,” np.
pavilion demonstrates the Peruvian Commission’s shift away from ENBA, as pupils from the Academy were originally planned as part of the display. In electing to turn their focus away from the official arts authority, the Commissioner and artistic directors conceded a large importance to the development of plastic activity in the margins of ENBA.

In his outline of the qualities of Peruvian art, Gonzalez Gamarra understood that all of the fine arts, including architecture and the applied arts, had the potential to be used in national image making. These views are reflected in the inclusion of the stained glass as well as textile work of the Izcues in the pavilion, and stand in opposition to Sabogal’s historic rejection and devaluation of the decorative arts. The overwhelming inclusion of artists working outside the Academy, such as Gonzalez Gamarra, Carmen Saco, Carlos More, Carlos Pazos and Romano Espinoza Cacéda on view in the pavilion, is evidence of a shift within the Peruvian government away from Sabogal’s indigenismo leanings and towards artists with an interest in the heritage of the Peruvian indigenous population, who were simultaneously engaged with international networks circulating within the realm of art, craft, and industry.

**Conclusion: An Essentialized Peru**

The displacement of Sabogal and ENBA from the pavilion by the government opened the sphere of official Peruvian representation. Despite this development, the objects on view were relegated to an enclosed national space, physically manifested in presence and design the pavilion structure itself. The primary location for the display of Peruvian art at the Fair, works such as the *The Inhabitant of the the Cordillera of Peru*, Gonzalez Gamarra’s untitled portrait

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133 ibid, 168.
and Carmen Saco’s maquettes, inhabit varying histories within Peruvian art, but when joined at the Peruvian pavilion, these objects were interpreted to express “an unchanging essence, a national ‘core.’”\textsuperscript{134} The underlying intention to categorize and essentialize for viewers within the foreign content of the Fair engages with discourse of authenticity that relegated artwork in the pavilion to a geographic and temporal hierarchy. By confining Peruvian artists to represent with their nation of origin, their works were placed outside the discourse of modernism,\textsuperscript{135} thus reinforcing a concept of Latin America overall as “the involuntary and unfair complement of the avant-gardes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.”\textsuperscript{136} In Tenorillo Trillo’s naming of the metaphors surrounding Latin America, one encounters this powerful statement that resonates with the Fair’s nationalizing parameters that essentialized the range of artistic approaches and theories in Peru on display.

\textsuperscript{134} Majluf, ““Ce n’est pas le Pérou,”” 892. The idea of a national artistic essence for Latin American artists extended to the 1939 Fair and the Riverside art exhibition.
\textsuperscript{135} Majluf, ““Ce n’est pas le Pérou,”” 892.
\textsuperscript{136} Tenorio-Trillo, “Introduction,” 38.
Chapter IV

Ancient Art, Modern Textiles: Exhibiting Pre-Columbian Heritage

Introduction

Upon entering the Peruvian pavilion, a visitor was met with a white neo-Baroque interior archway framed by two ornate engaged columns (fig. 29). A light fixture installed at the point of the arch radiated outward into an undulating form that framed the pavilion’s interior. The two figures visible at the base of the staircase in an installation photograph of the building provide a sense of scale for the stuffed llama, several rugs, and wall hangings. As one would enter the space, a mannequin of a “Nazcan man” wearing woven garments, stood in front of casework that contained small-scale ceramics and textiles (fig. 35). The objects visible in installation images together suggest the following argument: Examining the pre-Columbian collections, modern textiles, and industry displays point to developing cultural interest in archaeological work and industry in Peru. Techniques of display used in the pavilion paralleled recent installations in U.S. museums and showcased the collections of Rafael Larco Herrera (among others), as well as textiles by Victoria and Elena Izcue. The overall grouping of work on view in the Peruvian pavilion examined in this chapter presents an approach to defining the modern nation based on past achievements and industrial capital.

By 1939, the Peruvian economy was recovering from unrest due to a border dispute with Colombia. Under the rule of President Benavides and his motto “peace, order, and work,” the country experienced a rise in industrial output as well as in demand for cotton and other exports.137 In the epilogue to his text on Mexico at World’s Fairs, Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo

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observes that countries such as Mexico, Peru, and other Latin American nations “came out of a process of decolonization and arrived late at modern industrial development,” continuing that “nationalism acquired a specific feature epitomized by the inseparable link between nationalism and modernization.” Tenorio-Trillo’s words provide a historical framework for the intertwining messages expressed throughout the pavilion, where contents from the pre-Columbian and modern were selected to indicate the country’s economic and cultural capital for the future.

_Taking Possession of the Past: Collecting Mummies and Pre-Columbian Artifacts_

The Peruvian pavilion at the World’s Fair contained group of objects based in the traditional craft disciplines and selected by Victoria and Elena Izcue for the 1937 Peruvian pavilion in Paris. Ranging from pre-Hispanic to modern, the presentation included a mummy from Paracas as well as Chimú, Moche, and Chiclín ceramics and gold. Textiles on view are dated from ancient and modern time periods, including from the Paracas and Wari cultures. Given the evidence of the success of the Peruvian pavilion in Paris, as well as in other exhibitions with this type of content, the documented group of ancient objects on display fulfilled the growing interest of a United States audience in pre-Columbian history. Understanding the record of pre-Columbian objects from the Andean region, such as those on display in New York, in relation to the developing national image of Peru, indicates the cultural and economic connotations of pre-Columbian archeology and historiography.

A mummy, referred to as the “Paracas Mummy,” was on view in the New York pavilion (fig.36). Enclosed in modern casework, the clean lines of glass and metal framed a bundle of textiles. This heaping of fabric surrounded a mummified body wearing a woven crown. Typical of the mummies from the Paracas region unearthed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the body is curled into a fetal position. Secured by a wide woven basket, the well-preserved mummy was a draw for Fair audiences. Of this particular figure, a visitor to the pavilion commented “looking a the death’s-head of the Peruvian mummy, you recall the unburied, helmeted dead of the battlefields.”141 This passage evokes visceral imagery and signals the documented interest and fascination in Peruvian mummies by audiences in Europe and the United States.

The display of mummies at World’s Fairs in association with an independent Peru dates back to at least the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.142 A display of 125 mummies from the acropolis of Ancón was one of the more popular exhibits at this exposition (fig.37).143 Similarly named as the 1939 mummy, a “Paracas Mummy” was on view in the Peruvian Pavilion at the 1929 Exposition Iberoamerica in Seville (fig.38).144 These instances of mummified bodies on view offers proof of the historical success of the Peruvian government in highlighting ancient cultures from their country, particularly a spectacle such as a mummy. As anthropologist Sven Schuster concludes in his research on South American archaeology at World’s Fairs, the display of ethnographic objects like mummies offered proof of a “scientific modernity” for newly independent Latin American nations. Schuster continues, arguing that the fairs of the late 19th century were an opportunity for these nations to “reconstruct their version of

143 The display in Chicago was secured by the U.S. organizer of South American archaeology for the Fair. For more on the history of Peru at 19th century fairs, see Schuster, “The world’s fairs as spaces of global knowledge.”
144 Wuffarden, Manuel Piqueras Cotolí (1885-1937): arquitecto, escultor y urbanista entre España y el Perú, np.
‘Latin American antiquity’,” and to promote a vision of the nation-state as “the culmination of thousands of years of ‘American’ history.”¹⁴⁵ By the time of the NYWF, pavilions and other occasions for international participation for Latin American nations reinforced a unified American identity dependant on the authority of the U.S. The continued focus on the Pre-Columbian heritage of Peru and other Andean countries locally and abroad is an embodiment of Tenorio-Trillo’s conceptualized link between nationalism and modernism. These types of objects reinforced a unified national heritage in the face of new developments in Peru.

The many archaeological discoveries in the Andean region preceding the time of the Fair led to increased collecting of objects locally and internationally. In 1925, the National Museum of Anthropology, Archaeology, and History opened in Lima, where Elena Izcue made her first sketches of Pre-Columbian objects. Ventura García Calderón, a Peruvian writer, diplomat, and literary critic living in Paris penned the preface to El arte peruano en la escuela, Izcue’s 1926 workbooks based in her study of pre-Columbian motifs. Used as the basis for art education in schools, these books underscored the importance of pre-Columbian design and contained a series of drawing exercises. In his preface, Calderón recognizes the marginalization of the indigenous population in Peru as a result of colonization. He advocates for a national increase in the teaching of Peruvian ancient history in order to overcome this deficit, observing:

> Today, after a century of independence, the subject race is slowly awakened to a consciousness of self, recalling the splendours of the past, and taking pride in the thought of having possessed, like the Egyptians and Assyrians, one of the highest and most perfect civilizations in the world.¹⁴⁶

Advocating for the ancient cultures of Peru to be categorized equally with other great civilizations, one family who engaged with Calderón’s call for a modern “awakening” was brothers Victor and Rafael Larco Herrero. Each founded a museum for their collections and

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¹⁴⁵ Schuster, “The world’s fairs as spaces of global knowledge,” 74.
many pre-Columbian objects were found on their land near the northern city of Trujillo. These collectors and institutions and others played a role in Peruvian national identity at home and abroad. In the 1939 Peruvian pavilion, Chiclín, Nazca, and Chimú ceramics and gold as well as featherwork textiles from the Museo Rafael Larco Herrero were on view in casework installed in the interior walls as well as hanging from the mezzanine railing (fig. 35). Within the display, the ceramics are noted by a reporter for the Pan American Bulletin as “fun, for many have a humorous touch.” The installation of ancient objects presented an image of Peru that disregarded the immediate past, such as changing leadership and border disputes with Bolivia and Chile. Instead, this display privileged showcasing recently uncovered ancient achievements as markers of a modern nation.

The United States’ archaeological engagement with South America during this time coincided with the growth of various businesses and arts institutions, best represented by Nelson Rockefeller and The Museum of Modern Art, and the 1933 exhibition American Sources of Modern Art (Aztec, Mayan, Incan). Organized by Holger Cahill, who would curate the Latin American Art exhibition at the World’s Fair in 1939, the exhibition presented the Pre-Columbian world through a modernist, universalizing lens that promoted a common “American” legacy. Installation images of American Sources illustrate a spare, white cube display that has pervaded in MoMA’s legacy (fig. 39). The exhibition checklist contained pre-Columbian and modern works, positioning ancient objects, such as gold and feather work as a source for modern Latin American artists. In the catalogue, Cahill argues that “it does not seem probable that the heritage

147 Femenias, “Paradoxes of belonging in Peru's National Museums,” 322; Rafael Larco Herrero helped to publish El arte peruano en la escuela, for further reading on the text see Natalia Majluf, Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, Elena Izcue: El arte precolombino en la vida moderna.

148 “All Aboard! American Republics at the New York World's Fair,” 401; These types of objects were widely collected at this time, see Femenias, “Paradoxes of belonging in Peru's National Museums,” 321.
of ancient American art will ever pass out of the consciousness of the artists of...Peru.”

Reducing the relevance of pre-Columbian art to its formal qualities, the exhibition positioned the artists in relation to their nation of origin, qualifying an underlying national “authenticity” that could be traced back to the ancient times.

This focus on the timeless, formal qualities of Pre-Columbian objects continued in the 1940 exhibition Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art, which boasted the involvement of newly elected MoMA board president Nelson Rockefeller. Deeply involved in Latin American affairs, Rockefeller was associated with a variety of business and organizations that aimed to bring new economic and cultural enterprises to Latin American nations. A collector himself, some of his first pre-Columbian acquisitions were materials from Peru. In a 2014 article, pre-Columbian scholar Joanne Pillsbury discusses these objects; from the ceramics and textiles in his collection he lent the latter to the Peruvian representation at the NYWF. Part of the newly revealed history of the ancient Americas, Rockefeller’s possession and subsequent loan follows in the footsteps of other United States-based collectors and institutions who often claimed these recently unearthed objects under the pretense of “American art.” Through studying and presenting the Pre-Columbian past, collectors like Larco Herrera and Rockefeller, as well as museums like MoMA, sought to influence perceptions of Latin American Art in the U.S. and frame the Peruvian ancient objects and their formal qualities as valued sources for contemporary art-making in Latin America.

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149 Holger Cahill, American Sources of Modern Art (Aztec, Mayan, Incan). (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1933), Exhibition catalogue, 8. The exhibition contained 11 contemporary artists from across the U.S., Latin America, and Europe, including Max Weber, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and Carlos Merida.


Crafting the Ancient for the Present: the Paracas Textile and Elena and Victoria Izcue’s Vision for Pre-Columbian Motifs

At the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of national identity in Peru was impacted by the re-discovery of the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu by Hiram Bingham, a professor of South American history at Yale. The popularity of this site increased the appeal of indigenous imagery, costumes, and myths and is viewed by scholars of the Andes as “symptomatic of the times’ valorization of the vestiges of Inca culture as anchors for the nation as it was undergoing rapid transformation and modernization.”

Peruvians such as collector Larco Herrero and writer Ventura Garcia Calderon were invested in promoting Peruvian history and new discoveries about the past as touchstones for a national heritage. By 1939, United States institutions had participated for several decades in the fields of anthropological and archaeological research in Latin America. The inability of the Peruvian government to enforce patrimony laws resulted in the export of pre-Columbian artifacts to U.S. institutions, particularly in the case of textiles excavated from Paracas.

Archaeological activity in the Andes had expanded to the region of Paracas by the 1920s. A dry, coastal area in the south of Peru, the environmental conditions of the region lent to the preservation of materials such as human remains and fiber. These well-preserved specimens led to an increased scholarly engagement with the excavated textiles that dated from the first centuries of the common era. Within the context of the United States sponsored exhibition space of the Peruvian pavilion, “Textiles,” unspecified, are named twice in the “History and Archeology” section of the list of pavilions exhibitors submitted by the Peruvian Commission to

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153 Blenda Femenias, “Paradoxes of belonging in Peru's National Museums,” 321. The author notes that “today at least as many pre-Columbian objects are in U.S. and European museums as in Peruvian ones.”
The lack of specificity surrounding these materials requires a turn to comparable works that intersected with the historical context of Peru at the World’s Fair in order to gain insight into the pavilion’s display.

One such textile is the titled *Paracas Textile*, now in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum (figs. 40a-c). The mantle is noted for its intricacy and quality of preservation, and specifically for the 90 needle-knitted figures at border of the fabric, interpreted as a depiction of life on Peru’s South Coast. This textile matches some characteristics of an object described by a visitor in the Pan American Bulletin; they detail an “actual handwoven garments of an ancient Peruvian red woolen tunic,” continuing in their report that “such a weaving is unequaled.”

Many of the images illustrated in the textile depict native flora and fauna, as well as cultivated plants. According to modern research, the figures may represent humans “impersonating gods and acting as intermediaries between the real and supernatural worlds.” Also visible are severed human trophy heads suggesting the practice of ritual sacrifice. Documented provenance of the textile includes Rafael Larco Herrera as well as the Trocadero Museum in Paris. The *Paracas Textile* was heralded as “the rarest piece of archeological textile in the world” upon its first New York appearance in the 1935 *Exhibition of Modern Peruvian Art*. This exhibition, curated by the Izcue sisters, comprised of a display of “pottery, textiles and ornaments” from a variety of pre-Columbian cultures alongside textiles of their own design. Anthropologist Philip

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155 “All Aboard,” 401.
Ainsworth Means authored the catalogue foreword and was a member of the exhibition’s organizing committee, headed by philanthropist Anne Morgan, alongside recognizable artists and patrons, such as Le Corbusier and Robert and Mildred Bliss. On display in the Fuller Building in Manhattan, the project was sponsored by various institutions, including the Peruvian American Association.\(^{159}\) This exhibition and the inclusion of the The *Paracas Textile* foreshadows the type of ancient textiles on view in the New York Peruvian pavilion.

In photographs documenting the modern contribution to the Fuller Building exhibition, the Izcue’s scarves are displayed in a manner reminiscent of a department store, the mannequin heads and other supporting structures showcasing designs described as “a fish copied from a ribbon woven thousands of years ago, geometrical figures taken from a funeral urn…”\(^{160}\)(figs.41,42). While there are no known installation images at the time of this writing, a photo of Victoria Izcue at the exhibition with supporters gives insight into the style of display (fig.43). Behind the four figures are boards containing drawings or perhaps mounted textiles, appearing to be in a similar condition to the *Paracas Textile*. These were presented alongside drawings of ceramics and pattern studies. To the left of the display is a poster advertising the artists and their country of origin. Making a powerful visual statement in connecting the imagery and motifs of a Pre-Columbian past with modern artists from Peru, the Izcue contributions to the New York exhibitions in 1935 and 1939 presented a narrative of Peru that barely acknowledged the four centuries of Spanish colonization in the region.

While there is no documented evidence in the official World’s Fair record confirming that textiles and other work by the Izcue sisters were included in the New York pavilion, other sources suggest that their work was included, and that they took on the role of choosing the

\(^{159}\) Ainsworth Means, *Exhibition of Modern Peruvian Art by Elena and Victoria Izcue*, np.

\(^{160}\) “Textiles Designed By Izcue Sisters to Be Feature of Peruvian Art Exhibition,” np.
industrial displays. Articles published in Lima refer to the sister’s decorative work in New York, and descriptions of the pavilion in United States press included “distinctive present-day Peruvian textiles.” Examining images of textiles made before the fair as well as the critical and cultural receptions of their practice provides a picture of a particular pair of artists who participated in avant-garde art and commercial fashion worlds. Reynaldo Luza also contributed designs to the 1939 pavilion based on pre-Columbian iconography, for sale the next year at W. & J. Sloane department store in New York. Exposing the designs and motifs of their source cultures served to simultaneously provide a platform for and to commodify Peru’s indigenous heritage through their distribution. The continued connection of these artists with pre-Columbian heritage indicates the regionalist expectations for their work by European and U.S. audiences.

Throughout their practice, the Izcues sought to study and interpret for the modern era pre-Columbian motifs. After they moved to Paris in 1927, the two sisters’ production reached a new level. Elena studied printmaking, fabric printing, goldwork, and ceramics at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs and the Académie della Grande Chaumière with artists like Fernand Léger. The illustrated examples (figs.42, 44-46) indicate the range of the designs that the sisters produced by hand in small batches and sold from their Paris studio. All of the textiles were hand-printed, a contrast to the industrial displays at the fair that highlighted the mass production of goods. Installation views of the interior of the 1937 pavilion suggest an incorporated design that recalled the level of involvement seen in their salon incaico in Lima, while the New York pavilion revealed a more spare display (figs. 28, 29). Textiles from the time of the Izcues involvement in the fairs ranged from the pastel-colored ground of the geometric grid containing an abstracted

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162 “Interesting Exhibits Set for Foreign Pavilion,” Women’s Wear Daily, April 28, 1939, np.
163 Montero Protzel, Reynaldo Luza 1893-1978, 22.
164 Antrobus, “Peruvian Art of the Patria Nueva, 1919-1930,” 168.
bird to tightly gridded and filled patterns on sumptuous velvet (figs. 42, 44-46).

Following their first exhibition in the U.S., Ainsworth Means echoes the formalism of MoMA’s pre-Columbian exhibits in describing Elena Izcue’s engagement with Pre-Columbian motifs, “display[ing] an informed selectiveness which has permitted her to pick out from an intricate design its aesthetically significant elements.”165 Some of these “aesthetic” elements are visible in the pictured black and white handkerchief, the design of which is based off of a small geometric form that has been turned and printed in multiples to create the diagonally oriented design of the work. The solidity of the pattern concentrated to one corner of the textile is punctuated by three patterned lines reducing in size (fig. 44). While the named source for their patterns is “ancient Peruvian art,” few publications from the time provide further specifics about the source culture, often citing the ancient motif as “Incan.”166 Scholar of pre-Columbian art Esther Pasztory, argues that during the 1920s and ’30s “one can talk of a wider appreciation of Andean art through the diverse lenses of modernism.”167 The aestheticized and decontextualized patterns of the Izcue textiles correlate with European and United States-based views of Peruvian objects in exhibitions. Presented as collectables with value as works of design and craft, these objects were explicitly cut off from the valuation of fine art.

The Izcues, Modern Textiles, and Industry

Upon returning to Lima, Elena Izcue noted the quality of pre-Columbian art collections in the United States over those in Europe.168 The Izcues’ involvement with ancient art in designing

168 “Una charla con Elena y Victoria Izcue, dos espíritus de calidad artística,” La Crónica, August 25, 1939, np.
the pavilion correlates with, and expands upon, the Peruvian institutionalization of archaeology in the 20th century. While the folk, craft, and fine art objects discussed in this thesis thus far have shifted away from the neo-colonial symbolism encased in Cáceda’s bas-relief on the pavilion’s exterior, one must remember that the objects on view were tempered with industrial displays of textiles, minerals, and tourist pamphlets.

Discussions of the Izcues’ work at the time of the Fair also highlight the sisters’ modern use of materials, evoking European-United States oriented expectations for Peruvian production to offer commercial benefits to their economies. In his 1936 article in the Pan American Bulletin, Ainsworth Means continues his praise of the sisters’ work, especially their engagement with contemporary techniques and materials. The sisters used a combination of fadeless vegetable and mineral traditional dies on modern fabrics such as silk, velvet, linen, cotton. Their use of materials exemplifies the confrontation between the past and the present at the core of their practice and within the national presentation at the Fair. The United States fashion press reported on the technical offerings of the pavilion, Women’s Wear Daily sharing with their readers that the Peruvian participation at the Fair featured “ancient textiles from the time of the Incas along with distinctive present-day Peruvian textiles [to] portray the industrial background of Peru.”

Similar to the 1937 Paris pavilion, industrial, and agricultural products were a focus of the Fair, with a total of 26 manufactures displayed.

The taxidermied llama in the entrance previewed the upstairs mezzanine of the New York pavilion, devoted to an “attractive” display of Peruvian products, such as silverware, cotton,

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170 “Textiles Designed By Izcue Sisters,” np.
171 “Interesting Exhibits Set for Foreign Pavilion,” np.
sugar, and wool. Expanded from the small-scale production of the Izcues, pictured are wall cases containing samples of wool and woolen textiles, and noted is the work of La Molina Agricultural Experiment Station in cotton genetics (fig. 47). A New York fabric manufacturer who distributed llamas and alpacas, Stroock & Co., Inc., was invited by the Peruvian government to take part in the exhibit in the Peruvian building of the Fair, although their entrance was denied, as Fair guidelines stipulated that products on display in national pavilions had to be made in the country of origin. The continued focus on industrial possibilities throughout the pavilion highlights the raw and processed goods viewed as integral for the continued relevance of the country within a global marketplace like a World’s Fair.

Conclusion: Relevant Commodities

New attentions to national identity in Peru aimed to modernize both the present and interpretations of the past in order to acquire a modern national origin. Ancient and modern objects on view explicitly engaged with indigenous heritage. Spectacles of pre-industrial society such as the mummy and the Paracas Textile served to accentuate the technological advances of the modern world. For Peru, these advances were codified by the industrial and modern textile displays continued to circulate within a neo-colonial economy. The developments in pre-Columbian art collecting and scholarship in both countries positioned the U.S. as a cultural authority, and the grouping of craft and industry objects on display in New York resulted in the

173 “All Aboard,” 401.
174 “Peru Importers to Exhibit,” The New York Times, February 27, 1939, 15. The focus on Peruvian production was continued by the Izcue sisters upon their return to Peru in 1940. Re-dedicating themselves to local production and artistry, they would found a workshop for artisanal weaving. Later they were tasked by a regional government to assess the artistic and manufacturing possibilities of the area. These local engagements signal the ancient art and heritage as a pathway to modern development and industry. See Natalia Majluf, Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, “El retorno a Lima y los talleres artesanales.”
175 Tenorio-Trillo, “Conclusion,” 247.
low visibility of Peru’s colonial past. Overall, the pavilion presented a continuous narrative in the motifs and skill-based labor of textiles, industrial displays, and other ancient works. This checklist of objects concretized a myth of the past and provided support for its continued relevance and application for the future.
Conclusion

When an important work of art has utterly disappeared by demolition and dispersal, we still can detect its perturbations upon other bodies in the field of influence.
-George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*

At the close of the Fair, each building was de-constructed, and items were returned to their countries and locations of origin. Kubler’s quote resonates with the destruction of the Peruvian pavilion, as its contents comprising a unified nation display were dispersed. The only record of the structure’s contents are photographs and written documentation from U.S. and Peruvian sources. Exploring and dissecting these image and text-based sources results in a broad array of artistic and national expressions contained within the category of “Peru.” The histories on view illustrate the role of many in creating a unified history of one nation, expanding the possibilities for Kubler’s “perturbations” to collide with other narratives.

Developments in Peruvian archeology, political and economic realms, and within growing intellectual circles, impacted the role of the indigenous population in national image making. Artists such as Jose Sabogal and Carmen Saco responded to the situation of the Indian population at that time. Other artists, such as the Izcue sisters, turned to growing knowledge of and appreciation for pre-Columbian history in their practice and design work. Aiming to connect past innovations with present industrial potential, their artistic direction focused heavily on the integration of ancient motifs in modern life. Francisco Gonzalez Gamarra and Romano Espinoza Cáceda’s works depicting Indian subjects involved Colonial and Neo-Colonial signs and symbols, differing from other works on view. Installed within the national display at an international pavilion, this grouping of objects, paintings and sculptures were tasked to represent a unified and idealized national type.
The pavilion illustrated that modern design and art could coexist with traditional cultural identity. Jorge Coronado labels the merging of modernization with traditional forms in Peru as expressing a “vibrant agency,” echoing Néstor García Canclini’s identification of the contact between traditional and modern cultures in Latin America as a hybridity. The additional context of the Fair provides an overlay of Pan-American politics and viewpoints that privileged commercial and industrial potential. My argument establishes the Peruvian pavilion at the NYWF as an instance of Peruvian modernism that involved both state-sponsored and avant-garde artists. The buildings’ decorative additions and objects in the interior broadcast a state-constructed authenticity based on a narrative of pre-Columbian history as a source for the Peruvian modern.

This study of the Peruvian Pavilion at the NYWF confirms that world exhibitions can offer a comprehensive context to further examine the development of modernism across the Americas. Details that contributed to re-constructing the pavilion resulted from careful research and analysis of U.S. and Peruvian sources from the fields of art history, anthropology, archeology, political science and economics. Turning to official Fair documents, press coverage and comparable objects and exhibitions in relation to the display reveals the pavilion structure as a methodological tool to explore the intersection of industry, art and politics at the Fair. The resulting close analysis of a singular pavilion within a larger world exposition unearths narratives previously not known concerning the circulation of artists and works of art. These narratives, now included within the greater history of the Fair, underscore the value of expanding art historical research to include exhibitions outside of the gallery and museum. This thesis illustrates Peruvian modernity at the Fair as dependent on the interrelation of nationalism,

commerce, and art, in order to align with and benefit from the utopian, industry-oriented mission of the NYWF.
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PERUVIAN INDUSTRIES

"From the world’s rarest fibers to the world’s finest fabrics," says the poster in the case of wools and woolen textiles. Peru is the home of the vicuña, alpaca, guanaco, and llama, and also has many sheep. The various kinds of wool are both exported and manufactured at home into fine textiles.