

# THE RUFINO TAMAYO MUSEUM

*A Window on the Avant-Garde of the Twentieth Century*

Samuel Morales Escalante\*

**D**evoted to offering its visitors a comprehensive view of the plastic arts the Rufino Tamayo Museum opened its doors to the public in

\* Head of research and exhibits at the Rufino Tamayo Museum.

1981 with an exhibit of Rufino Tamayo's contemporary art collection. The painter, originally from the state of Oaxaca, left his collection to the people of Mexico and today it makes up the museum's permanent collection.

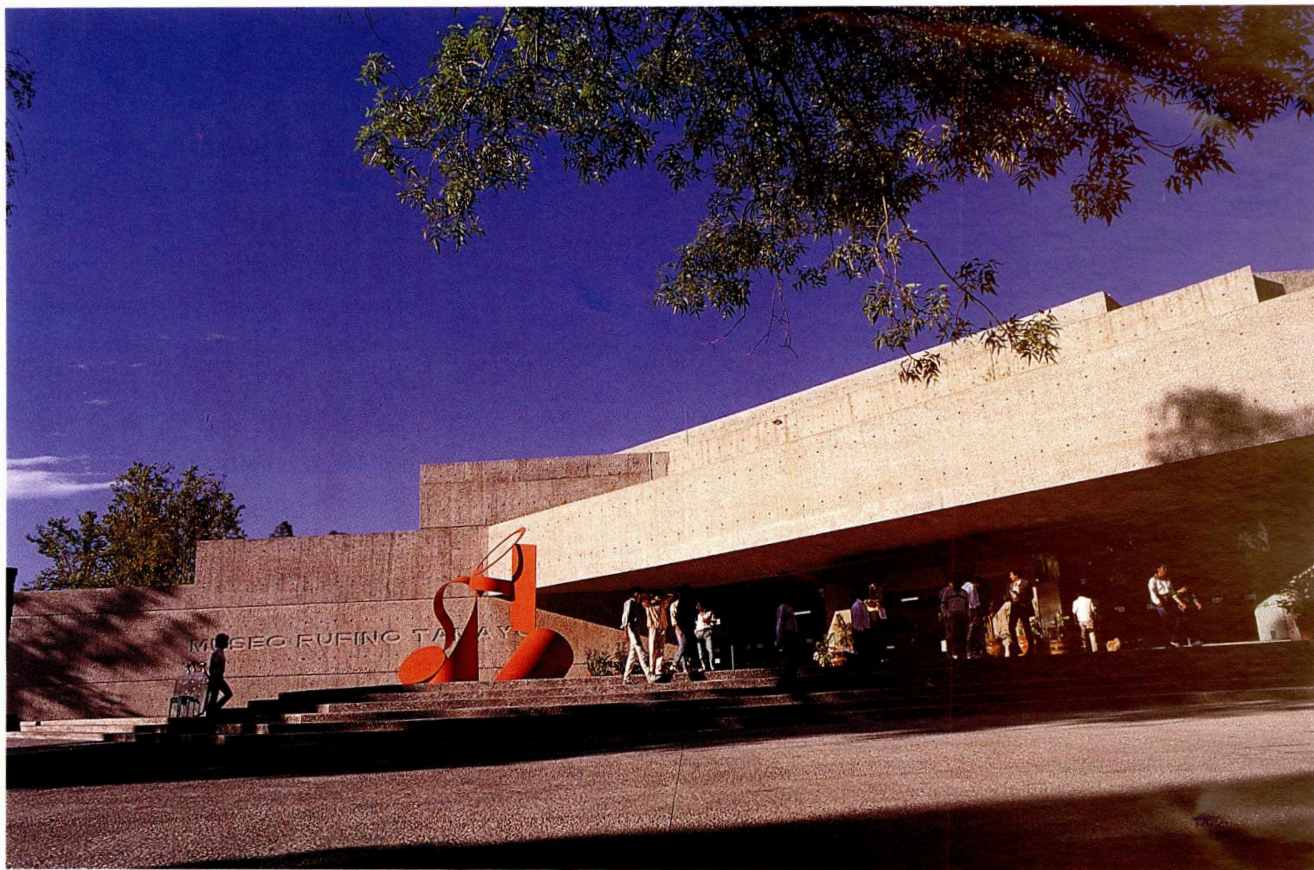
The project came to fruition little by little and had to overcome many obstacles. Rufino Tamayo and his wife Olga worked very hard to gather a series of art works representative of this century's movements and tendencies. Construction began in 1979,



Photos: Rufino Tamayo Museum Documentation Center

An example of Mexico's magnificent architecture.





The museum combines the formal heritage of pre-Hispanic and Colonial architecture with modern concepts and materials.

on a site in Chapultepec Forest donated by the Mexican government, and sponsored by the Alfa Group and the Televisa Cultural Foundation.

For six years the museum was managed by the business community; in 1986 it became public property, with the National Institute of Fine Arts as caretaker. Three years later, the Olga and Rufino Tamayo Foundation was created to support its activities.

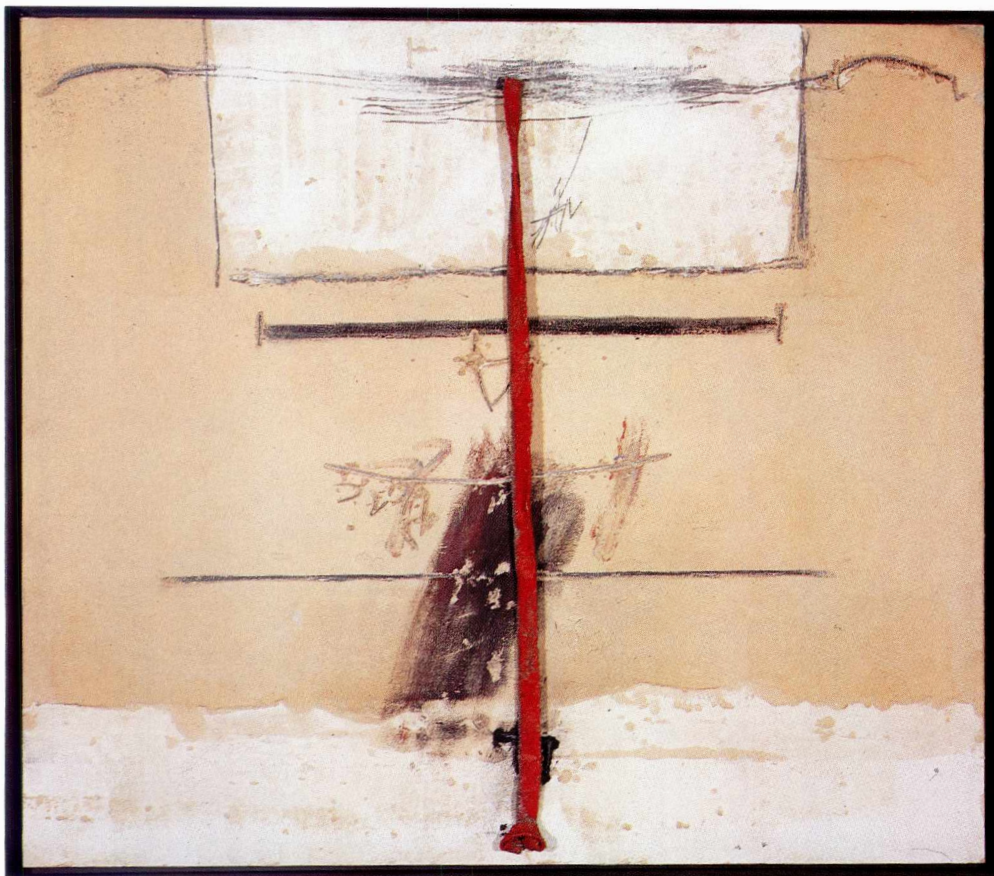
The Tamayo Museum has consolidated the aesthetic vision of its creator through its permanent collection—with discourses that vary periodically—and a program of temporary international exhibits with emphasis on Latin American art.

Additionally, the museum hosts multidisciplinary activities linked to other art forms like music, theater, literature and dance. It also holds workshops on graphic expression and courses for beginners. The objective is to offer visitors a repertory of

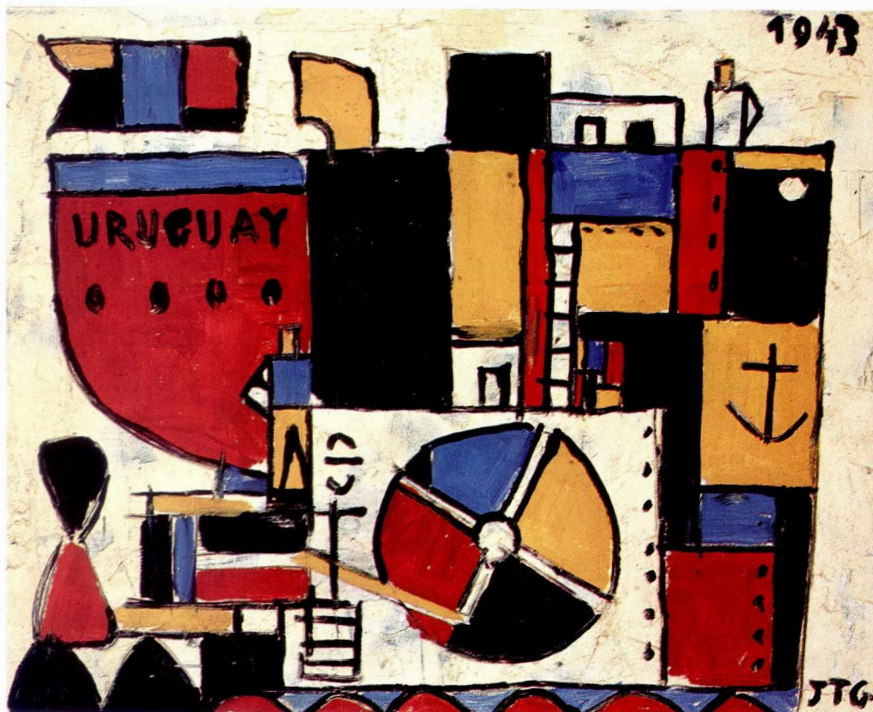
options according to their academic and leisure interests. The museum has a documentation center dedicated to the study of Tamayo's work and that of the artists in the permanent collection. In fact, the Tamayo Museum and Foundation have been

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Antoni Tàpies, *Red Strip*, 1971 (mixed technique, canvas).



Joaquín Torres García, *Constructive Boat*, 1943 (oil on canvas).

working for several years to locate and document Tamayo's work with the aim of publishing an annotated catalogue of his entire production.

Rufino Tamayo asked Mexican architects Teodoro González de León and Abraham Zabludowsky to design the building to house the museum. They took their inspiration from the formal heritage of pre-Hispanic and colonial architecture and combined it with modern concepts and materials. Their design sought particularly to emphasize the poetic value of the space in order to establish a harmonious relationship with the works to be housed there.

The museum seems anchored to a sinuous, tree-covered piece of land, completely at one with the landscape of Chapultepec Forest because of superimposed and inter-related volumes stacked on a pyramid base covered with ivy. One of the greatest achievements of this space is the visitor's surprise when he enters and walks toward the balcony vestibule—from where he can see the central patio—which evokes the center of a colonial Mexican house. Natural light, the textures of hammered concrete, the formal rhythm of tiles and walls and the view of the exterior landscape seen through an enormous window all establish a dialogue in this space. The invitation has been made and the visitor begins by deciding whether he wants to start his round by ascending or descending.

The museum has spaces that can be adapted to the needs of the dif-

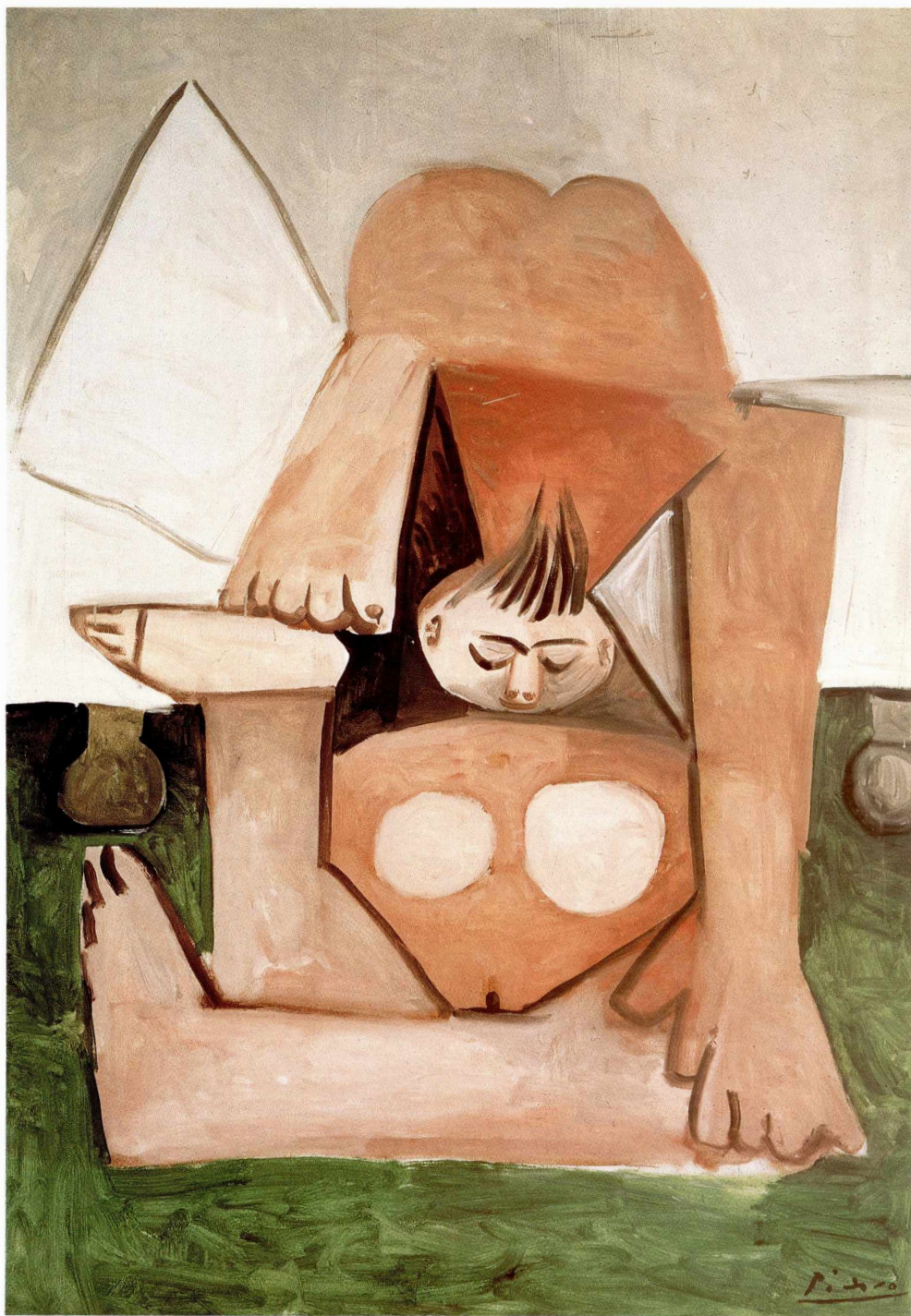


ferent projects and museological plans, whether they be large-scale or small works, and according to the variety of props or means of expression used by contemporary artists.

The permanent collection has more than 300 pieces, including paintings, sculptures, graphic art, photographs and tapestries. It is a sampling of some of the artistic movements of this century: Surrealism, Expressionism, Abstract Art, Informalism, Dadaism, Hyperrealism, Pop Art, Op Art, Kinetic Art, Geometrism, Constructivism, Lyrical Abstraction and New Figuration, among others. It contains the work of artists from all over the world, including Francis Bacon, Max Ernst, Willem de Koning, René Magritte, Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Robert Motherwell, Pablo Picasso, Mark Rothko, Antoni Tàpies, Vasarely, as well as some Mexican artists like Lilia Carrillo, José Luis Cuevas, Gunther Gerzo, Mathias Goeritz, Carlos Mérida, Francisco Toledo and Rufino Tamayo himself.

The artistic patrimony of the museum has increased thanks to the work of the Olga and Rufino Tamayo Foundation, which has either purchased or received donations of work from such recognized artists as John Chamberlain, Magdalena Abacarovitz, Kiyoshi Takahashi, Fernando Botero, Edgar Negret and Fernando de Szyszlo.

To broaden its scope, the museum has a program of individual and group exhibits of artists and movements representative of today's



Pablo Picasso, *Nude on a Divan*, 1960 (oil on canvas).

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The museum's central patio evokes the center of a Colonial Mexican house.

work in the visual arts. Some of the more outstanding showings include: *The Picassos of Picasso*; *Fernando Botero: The Bullfight*; *The School of the South: The Torres García Workshop and Its Heritage*; *Julian Schnabel*; *Robert Motherwell: The Open Door*; and *Louise Bourgeois: The Elegance of Irony*.

Another of the museum's objectives since 1987 has been the dissemination and promotion of the work of Rufino Tamayo through exhibits abroad in countries like Spain, Russia, Norway, Germany, Japan and an upcoming tour of South America. **VM**



The design sought to establish a harmonious relationship between the space and the works of art.