

sfa advisory

The Eyes of Rodolfo Abularach: A Selection from 1964 – 1979

October 26 – November 30, 2022

45 White Street, New York



SFA Advisory, in partnership with Ago Projects and the artist's estate, is pleased to announce *The Eyes of Rodolfo Abularach: A Selection from 1964 – 1979*, an exhibition of ten works by Guatemalan artist Rodolfo Abularach (b. 1933; d. 2020), who compulsively painted the human eye, volcanoes, and apocalyptic fires. The exhibition, SFA Advisory's first solo presentation of the artist's work, showcases a selection of paintings and drawings that depict Abularach's mysterious and singular eyes that evolve from the human to the transcendent and explore the eye as a vortex, portal, or doorway of mysteries.

Abularach began his formal artistic training in 1946 at the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas in Guatemala City. Soon after, Abularach expanded his studies into architecture, taking courses in abstract design. He was awarded a prestigious scholarship that allowed him to travel to New York City for the first time in 1958, and shortly thereafter he received Guggenheim Fellowships in 1959 and 1960. Abularach's early years in New York City were transformative; he met artists such as Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline, bonding over late nights at the Cedar Bar, and worked alongside Marcel Duchamp on the jury for a competition at the Hudson River Museum. In 1961, Abularach had his first solo show in New York at David Herbert gallery, receiving rave reviews; art critic Carlyle Burrows of *The Herald Tribune* highlighted Abularach's main concern with "mystical apparitions of light, space, and stillness in which a creative result is evident and subtle imageries are achieved."¹

During the mid-1960s, a pivotal time in his career, Abularach made the first iteration of his human eyes, a series that he would continue to explore for decades to come. In 1966, along with fellow artists Gego (Gertrud Goldschmidt), Rufino Tamayo, and José Luis Cuevas, Abularach was invited to attend the Tamarind Workshop in Los Angeles. He was experimenting with lithograph squares, drawing white centers when "suddenly the eye came out..." he reflects, "the world outside didn't interest me as much as the world inside. I have always tried to find within myself."²

To Abularach, the eye is the most expressive part of the body. Formally, his depictions take on a variety of styles: hyper-realistic, abstracted into a circle, larger than life and alien in feeling, monochromatic, or colorful. No matter what the style, they all share a quality of mystery and suggest an eerie feeling of being watched. While Abularach's disembodied eyes

¹ *A Non-Objective Trend of Detail*, Carlyle Burrows. *The Herald Tribune*, New York, 1961.

² Rodolfo Abularach conversa con Marivi Véliz: *El Librovisor*, Ediciones Alternativas del Centro Cultural de España, Guatemala, 2008. Pages 42-43.

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share the same starting motif, their beauty and uniqueness come from the way in which each eye is formally treated and consequently felt. The eye, after all, is the anatomical form that allows for perception.

Abularach was not interested in being part of any specific artistic group. While his enigmatic eyes draw inspiration from prior artistic movements, surrealism above all, his works are self-reflective and deeply personal. Abularach practiced yoga and meditation to tap into something beyond reality, allowing him to transcend space and time and giving way to a clearness of the mind that was crucial to his creativity and subsequent artistic creations.

The Eyes of Rodolfo Abularach: A Selection from 1964 – 1979 is on view at 45 White Street and will be open to the public from October 26 through November 30, 2022 (Monday-Thursday: 10am-6pm; Friday: 10am-5pm).

About Rodolfo Abularach:

Work by Rodolfo Abularach is in the collections of the following institutions: Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Museum of the Americas (Washington, DC), Museum of Modern Art (Bogotá, Columbia), among others. Abularach has been included in more than 100 exhibitions and has been the recipient of numerous awards, such as the First Prize in painting at the Certamen Centroamericano, Guatemala, the Acquisition Prize at the fifth Biennale of São Paulo, and the Carlos Mérida National Prize.

About SFA Advisory:

SFA is an art advisory specializing in modern and contemporary art. Founded by Lisa Schiff in 2002, SFA serves a select group of dedicated collectors around the world. SFA is made up of experienced art professionals able to assist in every aspect of collecting with the utmost confidentiality and discretion. SFA strategizes all aspects of building a fine art collection, from education and acquisition to installation and collections management. SFA prides itself on making the art world transparent for its clients, helping them navigate the complex web of relationships and platforms. SFA engages with artists, non-profits, and museums and participates in curatorial and special projects. SFA principal, Lisa Schiff, is frequently called upon to share her expertise and provide in-depth analysis to the press. Lisa makes a point to speak regularly on panels and to engage in public discussions, covering a variety of art-related topics.

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Image: Rodolfo Abularach – Flor Cosmica, 1977. Oil on canvas. 48 x 48 inches (121.92 by 121.92 cm). Courtesy of the artist and SFA Advisory.