

New Worlds: Frontiers, Inclusion, Utopias



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Published by



Editors

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ISBN: 978-85-93921-00-1

Editorial Coordinator

Sabrina Moura

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editors, Comité International
de l'Histoire de l'Art, Comitê
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Published by

Comitê Brasileiro de História
da Arte (CBHA);
Comité International de
l'Histoire de l'Art and Vasto

São Paulo, 2017

This publication has been made possible thanks to the
financial support of the Terra Foundation for American Art and
the Getty Foundation.

New Classicism Between New York and Bogotá in the 1960s

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During the late 1950s and early 1960s, artists around the world redefined the concept of abstract painting and sculpture to accommodate new possibilities of abstraction. One aspect of this broader shift was a movement known at the time as New Classicism. Among the most visible figures of this group were Colombian artists Edgar Negret and Eduardo Ramírez-Villamizar, who between 1956 and 1964 lived in New York and established close connections with avant-garde circles.¹ Upon their return to Bogotá in 1964, both artists continued the artistic program they had initiated in New York, extending the concept of a “new classicism” beyond the boundaries of the U.S. metropolis.

This paper studies the migration of this concept from New York to Bogotá, examining how it developed in both art centers and how it was adopted, transformed, and translated to accommodate different contexts. To the extent that the New Classicists have primarily been studied as individual figures and not as a generation, this paper sheds light on the multiplicity of voices that shaped the history of postwar art, emphasizing its inherently transnational character. At the same time, by emphasizing the roles of figures from Latin America such as Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar in promoting new approaches to abstraction in the 1960s, this paper charts new directions for understanding postwar art on an international scale.

“New Classicism” in New York

Following the glory years of Abstract Expressionism in the late 1940s and early 1950s, a younger generation of artists sought to move away from the highly subjective and chaotic art of their predecessors. Whereas some of them embraced everyday and popular culture as sources for the so-called “new art,” others proposed approaches to abstraction that were premised on erasing the autographic gesture.² Artists such as Frank Stella or Ellsworth Kelly employed geometric and hard-edged shapes

1 For a more detailed study of Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar’s artistic trajectory in New York, see Ana M. Franco, “Geometric Abstraction: The New York/Bogotá Nexus,” *American Art Journal. Smithsonian American Art Museum* 26:2 (Summer 2012): 34-41. Some of the ideas discussed here were first explored in the aforementioned article. In this version, however, I discuss in detail the concept of “new classicism” and its development both in New York and Bogotá, focusing on a more historiographic approach.

2 See David Joselit, “Expanded Gestures: Painting of the 1950s,” in *American Art since 1945* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 33-34.

that lent their works a cool and seemingly depersonalized approach to artistic composition. During the early 1960s, several exhibitions held in museums throughout the U.S. signaled the advent of this new approach to abstraction.³ Importantly, as Lawrence Alloway observed in his 1966 text *Systemic Painting*, these exhibitions revealed “an increasing self-awareness among the artists which made possible group appearances and public recognition of the changed sensibility.”⁴ This sensibility was seen by some as an “antidote to the increasingly moribund paradigm of Action Painting.”⁵ Although the artists represented in these shows did not constitute a unified movement or style, they all shared a preference for lucid, clear design; hard-edged, typically geometric shapes; and a restricted color palette often limited to flat, uniform primary colors or monochromes.

Although critics and curators used different labels to define and characterize this new type of abstraction—including Hard-Edge (Jules Langsner and Lawrence Alloway), Post-Painterly Abstraction (Clement Greenberg), Geometric Abstraction (John Gordon), Concrete Expressionism (Irving Sandler), or Abstract/New/Modern Classicism (Langsner, Stuart Preston, Barbara Butler)—they all interpreted the work of the younger generation of abstractionists as belonging to a “classical” tradition.⁶ Geometric abstraction in the early sixties was thus construed in the critical discourse of the time as a “new classicism”: an art of order, balance, and repose that was diametrically opposed to the “romantic,” overheated approaches of the action painters.

3 The most notable of these shows included Jules Langsner’s *Four Abstract Classicists* at Los Angeles County Museum in 1959; H. H. Arnason’s *Abstract Expressionists and Imagists* at the Guggenheim Museum in 1961; John Gordon’s *Geometric Abstraction in America* at the Whitney Museum in 1962; Ben Heller’s *Toward a New Abstraction* at the Jewish Museum in 1963; and Clement Greenberg’s *Post Painterly Abstraction* in Los Angeles in 1964.

4 Lawrence Alloway, *Systemic Painting* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1966), 15.

5 James Meyer, “Introduction to the ‘minimal’ 1: ‘Black, White, and Gray,’” in *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 77. This new sensibility would be further developed with the emergence and definition of Minimalist art in the 1960s in exhibitions such as Alloway’s *Systemic Painting* at the Guggenheim Museum in 1966 and Kynaston McShine’s *Primary Structures* at the Jewish Museum the same year.

6 The restrained and ordered compositions of the “cool” abstractionists, with their clearly outlined and flat hard-edge shapes, was associated in the early 1960s with *le rappel à l’ordre* following World War I and with Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier’s Purism. In this respect, critics suggested that 1960s abstraction was another postwar return to order and to the “classical” values previously revived by the French masters. See Frances Colpitt, “Hard-edge Cool,” in Elizabeth Armstrong ed., *Birth of the Cool: California Art, Design, and Culture at Midcentury* (Newport Beach: Orange County Museum of Art, 2007).

Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's work of the late 1950s and early 1960s was understood by New York critics and curators in precisely these terms. During their time in the U.S., both artists developed an approach to abstraction based on geometric and hard-edged shapes, as well as a restricted color palette.⁷ Moreover, during the early 1960s, these Colombian artists participated in several group exhibitions in New York that articulated the new approach to abstraction as a "new classicism" and a reaction against Abstract Expressionist art.

The first of these exhibitions was *Modern Classicism*, launched in February 1960 at the David Herbert Gallery in New York. The show included Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar alongside U.S. artists such as Josef Albers, Alexander Calder, Ellsworth Kelly, Myron Stout, Louise Nevelson, and Leon Polk Smith.⁸ The exhibition was based on the opposition between "*Romanticism*" and "its historical counterpart of *Classicism*"—the former represented by the then-dominant style of Abstract Expressionism and the latter exemplified by the work included in the show. Its main goal was "to show how much vitality and variety there [was] in this minority viewpoint. And to quell at least the frequency of its exaggerated obituaries."⁹ The David Herbert show was one of the earliest attempts to pinpoint the emergence of a different direction in American abstraction in terms of a "new classicism." Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's inclusion in the exhibition is especially significant because it defined them as integral members of the generation that was moving in this direction. In his review of the show for *The New York Times*, Stuart Preston emphasized the antagonism between a "classic" and a "romantic" attitude toward abstraction.¹⁰ It was accompanied

7 See Franco, "The New York/Bogotá Nexus."

8 There is a discrepancy between the exhibition catalogue, the installation shots, and the reviews of the exhibition with regard to Ramírez-Villamizar's participation in this show. Though the catalogue does not include Ramírez-Villamizar among the artists exhibited, Preston's review in the *New York Times* lists him as one of the artists featured in the exhibition and is illustrated by a reproduction of his contribution, *White Relief* (1960). See Stuart Preston, "Classicism Challenges Romanticism," *The New York Times*, February 14, 1960: 18X. Moreover, an installation photograph of the exhibition in the David Herbert Papers at the Archives of American Art confirms Ramírez-Villamizar's participation in the exhibition—his *White Relief* is clearly visible there. See David Herbert Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [box New Classicism]. Ramírez-Villamizar may have been a late addition to the show (perhaps after the catalogue went to press), or he may have failed to submit the requisite information for the catalogue on time.

9 Barbara Butler, *Modern Classicism* (New York: David Herbert Gallery, 1960), n.p.

10 Stuart Preston, "Classicism Challenges Romanticism," *New York Times*, February 14, 1960, 18X.

by a reproduction of Ramírez-Villamizar's *White Relief* (1960) as a prime example of the "new classical" art, demonstrating the extent to which the Colombian artist was a key player in the definition of the new abstraction in postwar American art.

A second exhibition signaling the arrival of the new abstraction was *Purism*, which opened at the David Herbert Gallery in October of 1961. It involved a similar roster of artists, including Albers, Kelly, Negret, Ramírez-Villamizar, Stout, and Smith, among others. Although all of them represented the "classicist," "geometric," or "hard-edged" approach to abstraction, this time, the curators opted for the term "purist," which, according to them, allowed "for flexibility and variety in selecting the artists as well as the pictures."¹¹ According to Goergine Oeri, who wrote the catalogue essay, "[t]he exhibition as a whole wishes to emphasize the creative moment as of now: to show the variety and vitality of what American artists today are doing in their own right by means of a particular pictorial language—the 'purist'."¹²

Further confirmation of Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's prominence within the new abstraction in American art was their inclusion in the show *Hard Edge and Geometric Painting and Sculpture*, which opened in January 1963 in the penthouse restaurant of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The show, selected by MoMA curator Campbell Wyly, was part of the Museum's Art Lending Service (ALS) program, which organized thematic exhibitions in an effort to present to the public the latest developments in postwar American art.¹³ Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's inclusion in this show was especially significant for them because, though it was not part of MoMA's

11 Goergine Oeri, *Purism* (New York: David Herbert Gallery, 1961), n.p. The use of the term "purism" here illustrates the extent to which 1960s critics associated the new abstraction with Ozenfant and Le Corbusier's Purism and identified it as another postwar return to order and to the "classical" values advocated by the French masters.

12 Ibid.

13 The ALS was a program of The Museum of Modern Art's Junior Council, founded in 1951 as a public gallery and an art library. From the beginning, the ALS's main objectives were "to promote modern American artists, to cultivate collectors of modern art, [...] and, in so doing, to advance the greater cause of modern art." See, Michelle Elligot, "Modern Artifacts 10: Rent to Own," *Esopus* no. 17 (Fall 2011): 118. In order to do this, the ALS provided the public with the opportunity to rent a piece of art for a two-month period before deciding whether to purchase the work or return it. After 1955, the scope of the program expanded and the ALS began to organize exhibitions in the Museum's penthouse restaurant. In the early 1960s these shows became theme-oriented and were organized by MoMA curators Pierre Apraxine, Campbell Wyly, Alicia Legg, Grace Mayer, and John Szarkowski. See, *The Art Lending Service and Art Advisory Service Records, 1948-1996* in The Museum of Modern Art Archives <http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/EAD/ArtLendingb.html> accessed on 2/13/2012

regular program, it was nonetheless sponsored by the museum and held within its premises. As such, the exhibition conferred upon the Colombian artists a sense of belonging to an emergent but vigorous and dynamic movement in postwar art that was sanctioned by the most prestigious international institution devoted to modern art.¹⁴

Ramírez-Villamizar's participation in *The Classic Spirit in Twentieth Century Art* at New York's Sidney Janis Gallery in the spring of 1964 further demonstrates that the Colombians were key proponents of the "new classical" trends in abstraction. The Janis exhibition had a broader scope than the previous shows, as it was conceived as an attempt to give historical dimension to the new art of the 1960s, connecting the latest developments in American abstraction with the early twentieth-century pioneers and the interwar generation of geometric artists in Europe and America. In this respect, the show aspired to demonstrate that the younger artists—including Ramírez-Villamizar—were the inheritors of a distinctive tradition of classical, geometric abstract art.

The retrospective character of the Sidney Janis show confirmed that there was indeed a "classical spirit" running through the history of modern art—a spirit that was manifesting itself forcefully in New York's art world in the 1960s. In his review of the show in *The New York Times*, Preston tried to define this spirit as "an absence of those personal, intrusive, self-indulgent elements which, in the view of a classicist, disfigure the

14 The enthusiasm both artists felt after being included in this exhibition might explain why critics in Bogotá wrote as if Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar were part of an important exhibition organized by New York's Museum of Modern Art. See for instance, "Edgar Negret (El Callejón)," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, 1963. Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar most likely did not feel compelled to correct critics who confused the ALS show with a regular MoMA exhibition. It was, after all, a mistake that played in their favor. The confusion has been perpetuated in the literature on both artists. See, German Rubiano Caballero, "El recurso del método y el mundo es ancho y ajeno," in *Escultura colombiana del siglo XX* (Bogotá: Fondo de Cultura Cafetero, 1983), 88. (Rubiano's confusion goes even further as he dates the show in 1961.) In 1985, as part of the preparations for his show *Five Colombian Masters* at the OAS's museum, curator Félix Angel wrote a letter to MoMA enquiring about the exhibition "Geometrics and Hard Edge," in which Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar had supposedly participated. Vicki Kendall, then Administrative Assistant of the Exhibition Program at MoMA, replied to Angel explaining that, after considerable research, she was not able to locate any reference to such show on the museum records. Vicki Kendall, Letter to Félix Angel dated February 13, 1985, Archives of the Art Museum of the Americas, Organization of American States, Washington D.C. [Folder Colombian art]. I was able to confirm in my research that the alleged show had in fact been organized by ALS in MoMA's penthouse restaurant in 1963 and, as such, it was not part of the museum's regular exhibition program. See Art Lending Service and Art Advisory Service Records, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York [Series: Art Lending Service 1948-1982 . Folder: I.D.1.35].

work of art. At any rate, it's on the rebound, perhaps an inevitable reaction to the recent excesses of expressionism."¹⁵ For art critic Dore Ashton, the "classical spirit" captured in the Janis show was a less clearly defined affair. Yet she acknowledged that common traits did exist among the artists exhibited in the show. In short, for Ashton, the Janis show was a reminder that "there is a big swing away from anything that could be characterized as an art of process."¹⁶ Significantly, Ashton's review reproduced one of Negret's sculptures as a notable example of the "new classicism" of the 1960s.

By 1964, the term "classicism" had begun to lose validity as a description of the latest developments in abstract art, as the radical proposals of Minimalist artists started to gain increasing visibility in New York's art world.¹⁷ As a consequence, the term has rarely been mentioned in recent histories of postwar American art. Yet our understanding of these "new classical" currents is key to comprehending the multiplicity of positions and the range of experimentation that occurred in New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Moreover, the term "new classicism" also had significant implications for the history of Colombian art.

New Classicism in Bogotá

At the same time that Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar were taking part in the "new classicism" in New York, they became the leaders of the local contingent of this movement in Bogotá. Local art critics closely followed their activities in New York and quickly adopted the labels of "purism," "hard-edge," and "neo-classicism" to describe their works. As early as 1961, art critic Marta Traba described Ramírez-Villamizar's work as part of the latest trend in American abstraction, "neo-classicism," which she interpreted as a reaction against Abstract Expressionism.¹⁸ A year later, in his review of Ramírez-Villamizar's

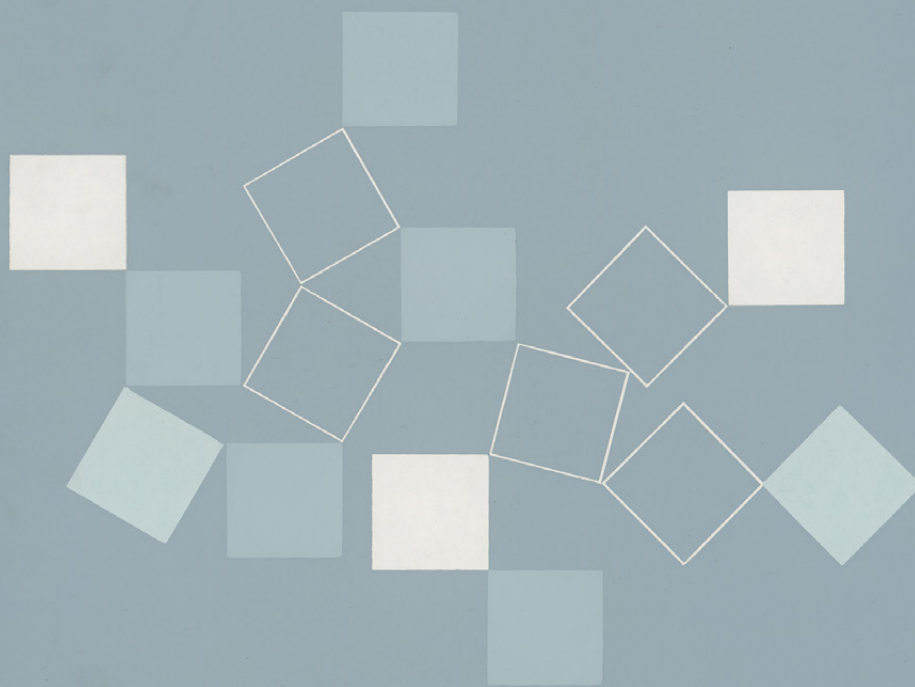
15 Stuart Preston, "Classicism on the Rebound," *The New York Times*, February 9, 1964.

16 Ibid. 166.

17 In 1963 and 1964, the Green Gallery in New York presented a series of exhibitions that featured the seminal figures of Minimalist art: Robert Morris and Donald Judd presented their first minimalist plywood sculptures in 1963; and Dan Flavin presented his sculptures of fluorescent tubes for the first time in 1964. With these shows, the Green Gallery introduced a radically new approach to abstraction in American art that took the depersonalized approach of geometric abstract artists, and in particular of Frank Stella's art, to an extreme denial of the artist's hand and subjectivity.

18 It is interesting to note here that in the Colombian context, the "new classicism" was not

NEOCLASICOS
NEGRET RAMIREZ RAYO
AFICHES : CONSUEGRA



GALERIA 25

CALLE 25C N.4-27

MARZO 13 6:00 ABRIL 4



David Consuegra. *Neoclásicos* (cartel promocional para la Galería 25, 1964). Serigrafía sobre papel, 49,5 x 34,8 cm. Cortesía, Colección Familia Consuegra, Bogotá.

exhibition at the Galería El Callejón, critic Estanislao Gostautas also described these works as part of “modern classicism,” identifying it as an alternative to the dominant “barroquismo informalista” and “decadent expressionism.”¹⁹

Negret’s sculptures were also seen by Traba and other Bogotá critics as part of the “new classicism.” In her review of Negret’s solo exhibition at Bogotá’s Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango in 1962,

translated as “nuevo clasicismo” (which would be the literal translation), but rather as “neo-clasicismo” (“neo-classicism”).

¹⁹ Gostautas. “Eduardo Ramírez-Villamizar,” *Política* (Abril 7, 1962): n.p.

Traba qualified the sculptor's "clear and balanced" work as essentially "neo-classic."²⁰ Another review interpreted Negret's work as part of American *hard-edge* and, in this respect, as a reaction against Abstract Expressionism. The reviewer wrote:

There is evidence today that there is a renaissance of the nostalgia for pure form. Just like Impressionism was followed by Seurat, Cézanne, and Gauguin's reaction against it [...] a new search and appreciation for pure form, for construction and geometry follows today the unbridled movements of tachisme and abstract expressionism. In the present year of 1963, the Museum of Modern Art in New York organized the group show *Geometrics and Hard-Edge* [sic], where Negret was represented with his work. "Hard-Edge" is, thus, the English label for the "new" orientation. It is an art that Edgar Negret and Eduardo Ramírez have been cultivating for many years now; even if they were once a minority [...] Negret and Ramírez are now at the forefront of avant-garde movements.²¹

By 1964, it seemed evident that a local contingent of "new classicists," headed by Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar, had consolidated in Colombia. Several articles published in local and international magazines discussed geometric abstraction in the country as a well-established trend at the time, and they often used the terms "classicism" and "hard-edge" to describe it, revealing that the labels used in the United States had already migrated to Colombia.²²

Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar, however, did not simply depend on the critics to publicize their efforts in their home country. In March 1964, they organized the exhibition *Neo-clásicos* (Neo-Classicists) at the Galería 25 in Bogotá to present this movement on the local stage. With this show, they consciously

20 Marta Traba, "Negret, Solitario en Bogotá," *La Nueva Prensa*, 46 (Marzo 14-Marzo 20, 1962): 65.

21 "Edgar Negret (El Callejón)." *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, 1963.

22 See for instance "'Purismo' Colombiano: La reacción ante el caos," *Visión* (February 21, 1964) and Walter Engel, "Geométrico-Abstracto," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, January 26, 1964.

asserted their leadership as the “group of two” who practiced New York’s “classical” abstraction, echoing the battle between classicists and romantics that had taken place in New York just a few years before. In the Colombian context, however, the neo-classicists were reacting not toward gestural, expressionist abstraction but against current developments in figurative painting within the nation. Specifically, *Neo-clásicos* was conceived as a response to the popularity of Fernando Botero’s most recent exhibition at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (MAMBo). Moreover, the show constituted the neo-classicists’ response to Botero’s attack on abstract art. Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar thus effectively co-opted New York’s recent abstract art discourses and repurposed them for the local context.

Botero’s Attack on Abstract Art

On the occasion of his upcoming exhibition (to open at the MAMBo on March 3 1964), Botero declared in the national press that abstract art had exhausted itself and was on the way to decadence. In an interview published in *El Tiempo* a week before his exhibition opened, Botero claimed, “We can’t confuse vanguard art with abstract art. The latter has already become unfashionable. [...] Every day I’m more convinced that abstract painting has been relegated to upholster furniture and decorate curtains [...]”²³

Over the next few weeks, Botero’s incendiary statement ignited a controversy within Bogotá’s art world. A notable illustration of this was the survey conducted by the editorial board of the newspaper *El Tiempo*, which asked artists and critics whether they agreed with Botero’s remarks about the decadence of abstract art.²⁴ For critics Traba, Casmiro Eiger, and gallery owner Hans Ungar, it was evident that abstraction was not in a state of decadence. In contrast, artists Alejandro Obregón and Ignacio Gómez Jaramillo stated that abstract art was indeed losing ground and becoming

23 Byron López, “La pintura abstracta se quedó para forrar muebles y decorar cortinas,” *El Tiempo*, Febrero 21, 1964. A few weeks later, on March 1, in an interview with Marta Traba, Botero confirmed his critique of abstract art. He claimed (perhaps more daringly) that because abstract art was the easiest form of art he practiced it on Sundays as a means to rest and, according to him, with excellent results. Marta Traba, “Yo Entrevisto a Botero,” *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, March 1, 1964.

24 The survey was circulated among critics Marta Traba, Casimiro Eiger, and gallerist Hans Ungar, and artists Ignacio Gómez Jaramillo, Alejandro Obregón, and Juan Antonio Roda and was published on the Sunday edition of *El Tiempo* on March 1, 1964.

unfashionable. Artist Juan Antonio Roda, who practiced a type of informalist or expressionist abstraction, refused to consider Botero's statement seriously, seeing it as a mere publicity stunt.

Art critic Walter Engel backed Roda's suspicion. In his review of Botero's show, he wrote: "In solos, duets, and chorus, the great hymn of egomania was sung as an introduction to the exhibition of Fernando Botero in Bogotá. [...] It was all very effective [...] we knew that Botero is [...] a genius of public relations."²⁵ Although Botero insisted that his statement was a profound conviction and not a mere publicity stunt,²⁶ his words certainly secured him an unprecedented commercial success in Bogotá—it was reported that more than 1,500 people attended the opening and all the works in the show were sold.²⁷

The Neo-Clásicos' Counteroffensive

The most eloquent response to Botero's attack, however, came in the form of the exhibition *Neo-clásicos*, which opened on March 13, 1964, at René Frey's Galería 25. Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar organized it in just a few days in an attempt to challenge Botero's view and demonstrate that their artistic approach was still very much alive in Colombia. To do this, they joined forces with artist Omar Rayo and graphic designer David Consuegra, whose simple, economical works shared the spirit of "new classicism" that defined their own artistic approach.

The show was immediately understood by critics as a response to the threat posed by Botero's works and words. In an article appropriately titled "Negret Launches the Anti-Botero Offensive," art commentator Juan Salas Castellanos explained,

Profoundly alarmed by the triumph of the figure, the "Purists" urgently organized the counter-of-

²⁵ Walter Engel, "La Marca Botero," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, March 15, 1964.

²⁶ In an interview with Marta Traba, Botero claimed: "I don't like publicity; on the contrary, I avoid it. [My statement against abstract art] is a conviction more and more profound. Abstract art is mere decoration, easy decoration; that's the reason there are so many abstract painters." Traba, "Yo Entrevisto a Botero."

²⁷ Engel reported that "Fernando Botero's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art opened last week with an unprecedented success in terms of critic and the number of visitors. During the afternoon of its opening, the show was visited by more than 1,500 people." Walter Engel, "El Fenómeno Cuevas," *Magazine Dominical, El Espectador*, Marzo 29, 1964. According to writer Gonzalo Arango, Botero sold all the paintings in the show. Gonzalo Arango, "Los Adorables Monstruos," *El Tiempo*, Marzo 15, 1964.

fensive. [...] They responded to the sordidness of form with the clarity of line; to the rudeness of the monsters with the elegance of profiles, wings, edges, spaces, void, and volumes; to the barbarity of Botero's smug pinks with the resurrection of white and shadow.²⁸

It is worth noting that Salas's description of the antagonism between Botero and the Neo-clásicos echoes the opposition between "classicism" and "romanticism" that New York critics had identified with geometric abstraction and Abstract Expressionism. In the local context, however, the "romantic" attitude was not identified with gestural abstraction, but rather with Botero's figurative art.²⁹

Despite Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's efforts and the favorable reception of their show, their enterprise failed to stem the tide of Botero's incredibly fast-growing influence. During the mid- to late 1960s, a younger generation of avant-garde artists followed Botero's figurative model and produced works attuned to developments in Pop Art. Among them, the most notable case is Beatriz González (b. 1938), who is widely recognized as one of the leading figures in the development of pop and conceptual art in Colombia. In fact, González has frequently stated that Botero's influence was key in her early career, claiming that at some point she came to believe that he "had already done what she wanted to do."³⁰

Despite the fact that by the mid-1960s, abstract art had been displaced from the center of the Bogotá art scene, Negret and Ramírez-Villamizar's *Neo-clásicos* show marks an important point in the history of postwar art. An examination of this show, and of the origin and migration of the term New Classicism more broadly, reveals an important nexus between the New York and Bogotá art worlds in the 1960s, one that shaped ways of understanding postwar art in both locales. An awareness of

28 Juan Salas Castellanos, "Negret Inicia la Ofensiva Anti-Botero," *El Tiempo*, March 22, 1964.

29 Although by 1960 there was a significant development of informalist or expressionist abstraction in Colombia, evident in the works of Guillermo Wiedemann, Juan Antonio Roda, Judith Márquez, or Fanny Sanin's early works, this approach to abstraction coexisted peacefully with geometric and classical abstraction during the postwar year. These two styles were antagonistic in Colombia as was the case in the US, France, or Brazil.

30 Beatriz González quoted in Carolina Ponce de León, "Beatriz González in situ," in Marta Calderón et al. *Beatriz González, una pintora de provincia* (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1988).

the transnational processes underlying these efforts provides an alternative means of understanding the encounters and dialogues between art and artists in this period. They also propose a conceptual geography that emphasizes the mobility of artists and ideas, multidirectional communication patterns, and the notion of artistic communities that are not limited by national or continental boundaries.

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