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PRESS RELEASE

Modern Latin American Masters Lead Phillips' Auction on 24 May in New York

**Including Rufino Tamayo, Carmen Herrera, Leonora Carrington,
Gego, and Lygia Pape, Among Others**

**Proceeds from the Auction of 14 Works to
Benefit the Colombian Foundation FLORA ars+natura**



Rufino Tamayo

Tres amigos, 1987

Estimate: \$1,200,000-1,800,000

NEW YORK – 27 APRIL 2017 – Phillips is pleased to announce highlights from the upcoming auction of Latin American Art on 24 May. Featuring works by Rufino Tamayo, Leonora Carrington, Carmen Herrera, and Lygia Pape, among others, the sale is comprised of 95 lots and is expected to realize in excess of \$7 million. A portion of the proceeds from select works will benefit *FLORA ars+natura*, a non-profit foundation based in Bogota, Colombia, that works closely with local communities, considering social, environmental, and political issues through their contemporary art program.

Kaeli Deane, Phillips' Head of Sale, Latin American Art, said, "Phillips has become synonymous with Contemporary Latin American art, and this sale is no exception, including incredible artworks by Carmen Herrera, Gabriel Orozco and Beatriz Milhazes. This season, however, we are particularly delighted by our remarkable selection of modern Mexican masterworks, such as Rufino Tamayo's *Tres Amigos* from 1987 and two incredible surrealist paintings by European émigrés Leonora Carrington and Remedios Varo. Phillips continues to change the conversation surrounding Latin American art by acknowledging these artists' ties to international movements. Their contributions to and significance within the broader art historical canon cannot be overstated. We are delighted to present such a diverse and important group of works in our first Latin American art auction of the year."

Leading the sale is Rufino Tamayo's *Tres Amigos*, a masterwork painted in 1987, the last full decade of the artist's illustrious career (illustrated page 1). Rufino Tamayo travelled extensively during his youth, forcing him to reevaluate his understanding of Mexican art within the context of European Modernism. As a result, Tamayo began experimenting with various techniques, melding avant-garde styles with depictions of Mexican folklore and indigenous culture. By the 1970s, his works liberated the traditional compositional structure of painting, staying true to figuration but building his compositions through a shrewd use of striking colors and simplified graphic structures. In *Tres amigos*, Tamayo has thickened the oil paint with sand, giving the painting a viscous texture and a raw, unfinished quality, much like the work of Jean Dubuffet. As both a symbol of Mexican pride and an internationally renowned artist, Tamayo has been featured in

countless museum exhibitions around the world, including a major retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1979.



Leonora Carrington
Pastoral, 1950
Estimate: \$500,000-700,000

Leonora Carrington's *Pastoral* (illustrated left) is also among the auction's highlights. The work was painted in 1950, after Carrington had fled from Europe during World War II to Mexico, where she became part of the local Surrealist community that consisted mainly of European expatriates. Carrington's interest in cooking and alchemy became integral to her work, as well as

her fascination with the animal world. *Pastoral* is an exquisite example of her mature work—a highly detailed landscape populated by fairytale-like, hybrid creatures, showcasing her masterful painting technique as well as her creative spirit, and drawing undeniable ties to the work of Hieronymus Bosch. Carrington was not only widely exhibited during her lifetime, but since her death in 2011 has been featured in museum exhibitions at venues such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Like Carrington, Remedios Varo left war-torn Europe for Mexico, where she was freed from the binds of the male-dominated Surrealist canon and able to express herself more freely in her art. Her jewel of a painting, *La Mujer libélula (Dragonfly Woman)* (illustrated right), will also be offered in the auction on 24 May. For Varo, Mexico was an ideal setting, as it gave her the physical and metaphorical distance from French Surrealism that allowed her to concretize a new form of the European movement, exploring the female psyche and portraying women as protagonists rather than the typical male-centric vision of her counterparts in Europe. *La Mujer libélula (Dragonfly Woman)* is a key example of this effort,



Remedios Varo
La Mujer libélula (Dragonfly Woman), circa 1961
Estimate: \$300,000-500,000



Carmen Herrera
Untitled, 1971

Estimate: \$400,000-600,000

depicting a graceful, yet powerful female figure painted in luminous layers of delicate gouache, who stares directly out at the viewer with a challenging yet quizzical gaze.

Carmen Herrera's *Untitled*, 1971 (illustrated left), is from one of the artist's twenty-two paintings in black and white, which were created in short bursts between 1951 and 1989. These works stand in contrast to the brightly colored paintings for which she is so well known and were critical to her artistic process, making up an important body of work that were shown together in the artist's first major museum exhibition in the United States at El Museo de Barrio in 1998. Herrera began her sojourn into concrete art when studying in Paris in the early 1930s. The present work has a soaring, skyscraper-like presence yet is entirely concrete in its design, creating a stillness that captivates the viewer, demanding attention despite its simplicity and serving as a reminder of Herrera's extraordinary and groundbreaking achievements in abstract art.

Eight elements from Lygia Pape's *Livro noite e dia (Book of Night and Day)* will be offered (illustrated right) and are from the Neo-Concrete artist's unique series of "books," which explore history, time and humanity, functioning equally as visual poetry and pieces of art. The present work belongs to a series in which Pape created three sets of unique objects—each consisting of 365 elements—over a period lasting from 1963 to 1976. Each of these objects represents a day in the span of a year and the work closely relates to her most famous work, the *Book of Time*. Unlike the *Book of Time*, which consists of brightly hued primary colors, the *Book of Night and Day* has a subtler visual effect, utilizing only variations of white and black. It allowed her to study light and have more freedom in the creation of each element. Often seen in the shadow of her Brazilian contemporaries Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, Pape is now receiving well-deserved international accolades with a marvelous retrospective at the Met Breuer in New York, her first exhibition of this kind in the United States.



Lygia Pape

Livro noite e dia (Book of Night and Day), 1963-1976

Estimate: \$300,000-500,000



Wifredo Lam
Untitled, circa 1943
Estimate: \$300,000-500,000

An untitled work by Wifredo Lam, executed circa 1943 (illustrated left), is another highlight of the sale. Among Lam's many contributions to modern painting, he expanded both the parameters of Surrealism and Cubism by imbuing his work with a unique Afro-Cuban vocabulary infused with Santería. The subtle luminosity of the painting illustrated here embodies one of Lam's iconic motifs, the metamorphosed figure of the *femme-cheval* – a hybrid creature, both woman and horse – possessed by a spiritual divinity. When Lam painted *Untitled*, he was at the height of his career, producing some of his most important works, including his masterpiece, *The Jungle*, 1943, purchased by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the year of its creation. Internationally lauded during his lifetime, Lam's importance has recently been re-acknowledged with retrospectives at the Centre Pompidou, Museo Reina Sofia, and the Tate Modern in 2015 and 2016.

Works Sold to Benefit FLORA ars+natura

Phillips is delighted to announce that 14 lots in the Latin America auction will benefit FLORA ars+natura, a non-profit foundation based in Bogota, Colombia, which deals with the myriad relationships between art and nature. FLORA's programs have had important implications for both artistic and non-artistic circles; its team works closely with local communities, considering social, environmental, and political issues through contemporary art projects. The organization is run by José Roca, former TATE Estrellita B. Brodsky Adjunct Curator of Latin American Art and co-curator of the 27th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2006), with his wife Adriana Hurtado, cultural administrator. A variety of works generously donated by artists will be offered, whose proceeds will support FLORA's mission.



Los Carpinteros

Estudio de Hans Poelzig, sólido tres, 2016

Estimate: \$18,000-22,000

José Roca, Curator and Artistic Director of FLORA,

said, “FLORA is honored to partner with Phillips on this important auction, which will bring international attention to our organization and raise funds to help us continue in our mission of offering residencies, exhibitions and educational programs—particularly those that support emerging artists. We admire Phillips' expertise and dedication to promoting contemporary Latin American art, and are very grateful to the talented artists who have graciously donated works to this auction. Their generosity will help provide wonderful opportunities for countless others.”

Additional Highlights in the Auction



Gego

Untitled, 1967

Estimate: \$200,000-300,000



Gabriel Orozco

Samurai Tree 6C, 2009

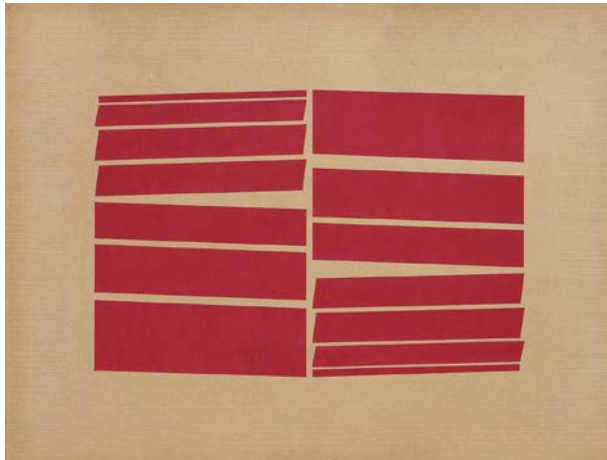
Estimate: \$200,000-300,000



David Alfaro Siqueiros
Tehuanas, 1949
 Estimate: \$250,000-350,000



Alfredo Volpi
Banderinhas com maestro, circa 1970
 Estimate: \$100,000-150,000



Hélio Oiticica
Metasquema, 1958
 Estimate: \$200,000-300,000



Beatriz Milhazes
O Cisne, 2001
 Estimate: \$200,000-300,000

Auction: Wednesday, 24 May 2017, 2pm

Auction viewing: 20-24 Month | Saturday- Wednesday, 10am-6pm

Location: 450 Park Avenue, New York

Link to more information: <https://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/NY010517>

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