Journeys of Julio Alpuy
This retrospective exhibition at the Mishkin Gallery celebrates six decades of painting and sculpture by the Uruguayan artist Julio Alpuy. From his early work in the 1940s at El Taller Torres-García ("The School of the South") to his recent paintings in 1996, Alpuy’s work documents his participation in and his contribution to the international development of modern art.

I would like to thank the artist for his help with organizing this exhibition. I am grateful for the assistance of María R. Balderama, who provided an essay for this catalog and helped with the organization of the exhibition. I also appreciate the cooperation of Cecilia de Torres, who represents the work of Alpuy and has brought his paintings and sculpture to the attention of the New York public with exhibitions in her Soho gallery. Her gallery director, Dan Pollock, was also very helpful in providing information and materials about the artist and in preparing the work for exhibition. I would also like to thank Oscar Prato for his assistance in Montevideo.

The support of Carlos Orlando, consul general of Uruguay, has been very important for this exhibition. The catalog was funded with help from the Fundación Amigos del Patrimonio del Cultural del Uruguay, Montevideo: Walter Caevezao, senior vice president and general manager of the Banco de la República Oriental del Uruguay in New York; Castells & Castells, auctioneers in Montevideo; Cecilia de Torres, Ltd., New York; and The Baruch College Fund. On behalf of Baruch College, I would like to express my appreciation to them all.

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the encouragement and support of Baruch College President Matthew Goldstein and Provost Lobo Cronholt. Their commitment to providing cultural programs at Baruch College has been essential to the success of the Mishkin Gallery.

SANDRA KRASKIN, DIRECTOR
SIDNEY MISHKIN GALLERY

Designer: Shirin Iones
Photographer: James DeDe, Charles Manley
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Sandra Kraskin, Curator
Baruch College/CUNY, 135 East 22 Street, New York, New York 10010
In his visual journey of six decades, Julio Alpuy has traversed a path that explores most of the major tenets of twentieth-century modernism. Born in Uruguay, Alpuy is one of the most innovative artists among the group of avant-garde Latin Americans who worked with the Uruguayan master Joaquín Torres-Garcia at El Taller Torres-Garcia ("School of the South") during the 1940s. Alpuy, who worked with Torres-Garcia from 1940 to 1949, developed his own variation of constructivism in painting and sculpture. This he refined as he traveled and studied in Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East during the 1950s. In 1961 he moved to New York City, where he now lives and works.

Alpuy's early work, which reflects his modernist training at El Taller, renders and transforms nature into symbolic pictographs structured within a grid. Alpuy has continued to personalize and extend the concepts of Torres-Garcia, inventing his own legendary narratives. Like Torres-Garcia, he draws from the discoveries of cubism and the neoplastic structure of Mondrian, using vertical and horizontal lines to divide his painted and carved constructions. With great originality, Alpuy creates paintings that have the haptic quality of sculpture and sculpture that is painterly, often working with primary colors.

In 1963, two years after Alpuy arrived in New York City, the definition of the grid began to disappear from his work. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, his paintings and sculpture appeared less visually structured, but his deep understanding of the use of classical proportions and his implied verticals and horizontals form his compositions even when they are invisible. Alpuy constructs his figures, landscapes, and still-life objects to invent a world that extends beyond specific geography—creating a universal landscape.

Alpuy has exhibited in all of the group shows of the artists from El Taller; therefore an exhibition of his work also continues the documentation of that school. Although his artistic identity has been closely linked to Torres-Garcia, Alpuy's work merits serious independent consideration. Presenting an opportunity to view a broad range of his painting and sculpture, this retrospective exhibition at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery reveals a universal vision of great power and insight. Julio Alpuy has invented a marvelous world that spans six decades and crosses four continents.

SANDRA KRASZIN

Still Life Painted with Primary Colors, 1948
Julio Alpuy: An International Painter and Sculptor

Julio Alpuy, one of the preeminent artists of the workshop of Joaquín Torres-García, has always been an independent painter and sculptor to whom no stylistic label accurately applies. Each of his works in all varieties and mediums, from the earlier to the most recent, more than 40 of which are on display in this retrospective, evolves from and goes beyond what he learned at El Taller.

Reality and nature are the sources from which Alpuy’s works begin. Throughout his life he has journeyed and worked far from his native Uruguay traveling to other countries in Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East. Recollected moments from these experiences often inform his paintings, which include constructivist cityscapes as well as imaginary landscapes and symbolic abstractions taken from nature.

In his paintings, Alpuy sometimes provides traditional clues (in differently constructed compositions) to hint at the depth of a space. Yet the richness of Alpuy’s combinations of earth and primary colors focuses the viewer’s attention on the surface. Although Alpuy has defined himself as “basically a painter,” he began to do reliefs and sculptures in wood when he arrived in New York in 1961. From the monochromatic tones of his works on wood and on canvas to his intensely colored paintings, Alpuy maintains his consistency of message and style.

Alpuy eloquently summed up that message in an interview for the catalog of the 1980 exhibition Julio Alpuy which was held at the Galería de Arte Karlen Gugelmeier in Montevideo: “An artist is a builder—builder of something he believes in and has faith in. To express something as an artist is to assert something as a man. To build is a way of expression. The conscious expression of a man who is an artist who builds with elements to create something solid, a unity.”

MARIA R. BALDEÑAMA
Julio Alpuy was born in Tacuarembó, Uruguay, in 1919. He moved to Montevideo in 1935 to continue his studies. In 1940, at the age of 21, he was introduced to Joaquín Torres-García and joined the Torres-García workshop. In 1943-44 he began teaching at the workshop under Torres-García's direction. In 1945 Alpuy traveled to Peru and Bolivia with Gonzalo Fonseca and Jonio Montiel. Both members of the workshop. In Montevideo in 1949, he executed several mural commissions in mosaic for the architects Leborgne and De Leone and for Torres-García's home. In 1951-53 he traveled to Europe and the Middle East and recorded impressions of his travels in sketchbooks. In 1953 he returned to Montevideo and resumed teaching at El Taller. In 1955 he executed a series of large mural paintings for architects Paysé Reyes, the Lyceum Larrañaga, and the YMCA headquarters in Montevideo. In 1957 he traveled to Chile, and then, invited by Colombian artists, he moved to Bogotá. In Bogotá Alpuy met the renowned art critic Marta Traba. In 1959 he moved to Caracas, and then in 1961 he emigrated to New York City, where he still resides teaching privately and working in his Soho studio. In 1981 he received a mural commission at the Uruguayan Embassy in Buenos Aires. Alpuy has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1983), the New York Council for the Arts (1986) and the Gottlieb Foundation (1990).

Selected One Person Exhibitions
- 1985: Galería Diaglò. Brussels
- 1985: Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New York
- 1983: Museo Reys. Bolivar-Valle, Colombia
- 1980: Galería Sarmiento. Buenos Aires
- 1978: Galería La Tintorería. Caracas
- 1972: Julio Alpuy. Center for Inter-American Relations, New York

Selected Group Exhibitions
- 1990: Walter Fei Maibaum Fine Arts, New York
- 1986: Torres-García and His Legacy, Robert Miller Gallery, New York
- 1983: Mira, Museo del Barrio, New York
- 1985: Uruguayan Exhibition, Mira, Museo del Barrio, New York
- 1983: Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New York
- 1983: Museo Rayo, Roldanillo, Valle, Colombia
- 1980: Galeria Sarmiento. Buenos Aires
- 1977: Window to the South, Henry Street Settlement, New York
- 1973: Selected Works from Latin America, Stamford Museum, New York
- 1969: La Casa de Torres y Garcia, Galería Clave, Caracas
- 1966: Mural in the Lyceum Larrañaga, Montevideo, Uruguay
- 1966: Las Taller Torres-García, Museo Central de Costa Rica
- 1963: Mural in the Lyceum Larrañaga, Montevideo, Uruguay
- 1956: Juan Larrea, Exposición de Arte, Buenos Aires
- 1955: El Taller Torres-García, Museo Central de Costa Rica
- 1953: El Taller Torres-García, Museo Central de Costa Rica
- 1948: Estudio de Capricho Contemporáneo, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas
- 1945: Alpuy traveled to Peru and Bolivia with Gonzalo Fonseca and Jonio Montiel. Both members of the workshop. In Montevideo in 1949, he executed several mural commissions in mosaic for the architects Leborgne and De Leone and for Torres-García's home. In 1951-53 he traveled to Europe and the Middle East and recorded impressions of his travels in sketchbooks. In 1953 he returned to Montevideo and resumed teaching at El Taller. In 1955 he executed a series of large mural paintings for architects Paysé Reyes, the Lyceum Larrañaga, and the YMCA headquarters in Montevideo. In 1957 he traveled to Chile, and then, invited by Colombian artists, he moved to Bogotá. In Bogotá Alpuy met the renowned art critic Marta Traba. In 1959 he moved to Caracas, and then in 1961 he emigrated to New York City, where he still resides teaching privately and working in his Soho studio. In 1981 he received a mural commission at the Uruguayan Embassy in Buenos Aires. Alpuy has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1983), the New York Council for the Arts (1986) and the Gottlieb Foundation (1990).
Catalog of the Exhibition

Study for a Island, 1955
Ink and watercolor on paper, 23 x 18 1/4".
Collection of the artist.

Composition, 1951
Oil on canvas, 25 x 26 1/4".
Collection of the artist.

Duluth, 1950
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 1/4".
Collection of the artist.

Latrobe, 1949
Oil on canvas, 16 x 20 1/4".
Collection of the artist.

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