

cultura *viva*

We are the Smithsonian Latino Center.
We celebrate Latino culture, spirit and
achievement in America.

Fall/Winter | 2007



SEPTEMBER 13-NOVEMBER 2, 2006 “Myth, Mortals, and Immortality: Works from Museo Soumaya de México,” on view at the International Gallery until November 2, showcases 100 works of art from the 17th to 20th century by Mexico’s most renowned artists including Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, José Agustín Arrieta, Juan Soriano and David Alfaro Siqueiros. > PG 4

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¡Smithsonian con Sabor!—our inaugural benefit gala, see photos inside. pg 6

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SPECIAL THANKS

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LETTER FROM *the Director*

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year! As the Smithsonian Latino Center enters its tenth year, I am extremely proud to introduce the first issue of the quarterly newsletter *Cultura Viva*.

We certainly have a lot to talk about in this first issue: the Center held its inaugural benefit gala in September ¡Smithsonian con Sabor! a successful fundraising event with true Latin flavor at the Smithsonian Castle. The event launched an annual tradition of celebrating a different Latin culture each year throughout the Center's gala and programmatic activity. We also opened two wonderful exhibitions during Hispanic Heritage month – “Colombia at the Smithsonian: The Colombian Presence in the Collections of the Smithsonian Institution” and “Myth, Mortals and Immortality: Works from Museo Soumaya de México” in collaboration with that prestigious Mexican museum which holds the private collection of entrepreneur Carlos Slim. In our newsletter you will read articles by Smithsonian Latino Center staff and our collaborators who were involved in making each of these projects happen. We'll also

give you a sneak peak at some of our new initiatives and information on how to find out about our upcoming programs.

The Smithsonian Latino Center celebrates Latino culture, spirit, and achievement in America. Our specific mission is to increase public awareness of a community that is not only important historically to America but is also making an incredible impact on our society today. Latinos are an important part of our societal fabric, our living culture – *cultura viva*. We want Latinos in America to feel their culture and achievements are understood and appreciated and we want all Americans to understand the impact of Latinos on their collective heritage.

Thank you for your support and interest. We look forward to seeing you at the Smithsonian.

¡Que viva nuestra cultura!

PILAR O'LEARY, DIRECTOR
SMITHSONIAN LATINO CENTER



LETTER FROM *Henry Muñoz*

Dear Friends,

This premiere issue of *Cultura Viva* highlights some of the Smithsonian Latino Center's work during the past year to honor the contributions of Latinos to art, science and the humanities and also gives you a preview of great things to come.

The Smithsonian Latino Center has worked in close collaboration with experts across the Institution to ensure that exhibitions, public programs and educational opportunities include and fully reflect the diversity and depth of American civilization in all its multicultural beauty. “Colombia at the Smithsonian,” “Myth, Mortals and Immortality” and the dazzling ¡Smithsonian con Sabor! gala were unforgettable displays illustrating the richness and diversity of our Latino heritage. We were pleased to be able to share these wonders with our audiences and invite you not only to read through our newsletter, but also to browse the pages of our new website at (www.latino.si.edu) which is rich in educational content.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals and companies who have supported us throughout the years. We need your support to ensure that every young American sees his or her own heritage and cultural identity respectfully represented in our nation's most important museums. I hope you will join us in this important effort.

HENRY R. MUÑOZ, III, CHAIRMAN
SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL LATINO BOARD





Colombian Exhibition Launches

LATINO COLLECTIONS SURVEY AT THE SMITHSONIAN

What began as the desire to present a dazzling display of Colombian art and artifacts from Smithsonian museums at the Latino Center's first annual gala, has evolved into a pan-institutional survey of the key Latino collections throughout the Smithsonian and to exhibit objects from Smithsonian collections from different a different Latin culture each year.

ON SEPTEMBER 6TH, over 700 guests previewed the exhibition *Colombia at the Smithsonian: The Colombian Presence in the Collections of the Smithsonian Institution* at the Castle during the inaugural benefit gala *¡Smithsonian Con Sabor!* Originally scheduled to close in October, the exhibit was extended due to popular demand for an additional 13 weeks until January 15, 2007. More than 300,000 visitors viewed the exhibit through the months of September through December 2007.

Organized by the Center's director of exhibitions and public programs Henry Estrada, in collaboration with Smithsonian curators across the Institution, "*Colombia at the Smithsonian* celebrates the collaborative relationship between the Smithsonian Institution and the country of Colombia by highlighting Colombian collections and research initiatives at the Smithsonian Institution over the last century. The exhibit's nearly 75 objects and art works showcase the full range of Colombian presence in the Smithsonian's collections including: butterflies, insects, precious gems and minerals including the Colombian Mackay emerald, the dazzling centerpiece in a priceless necklace fashioned by Cartier in the 1930's, to historical stamps and coins, to

indigenous objects dating to 1400 and contemporary art works by renowned artist Fernando Botero.

"This collections-based exhibition is all part of a larger plan to assess the Latino and Latin American collections at the Smithsonian in order to better facilitate new acquisitions and create new opportunities for research, education, and programming," said Estrada. "The goal of this initiative is to ensure that the contributions to art, science and the humanities by our hemispheric neighbors to the South are highlighted and understood by both Latino and non-Latino audiences that visit the Smithsonian," he said.

The Smithsonian Latino/Latin American Collections Survey grew from the Center's longstanding initiative to compile a digital database of the Latino collections at the Smithsonian. One of the first products created from this initiative was the 2003 publication of "Brazil at the Smithsonian," which highlights the Smithsonian's key collections from the country of Brazil. The digital database of the Smithsonian's Latino collections will be accessible to the public through the Center's online virtual exhibitions and interactive search engines. ✨



Botero's "Reclining Eve" is on view at the Smithsonian Castle until January 15. [pg 5](#)

TOP LEFT: PILAR O'LEARY PHOTO BY DARIO ACOSTA **TOP RIGHT:** COLOMBIAN BUTTERFLY PHOTO BY JIM DILORETO. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. **CENTER:** FERNANDO BOTERO, "RECLINING FIGURE" (EVE), PHOTO BY LEE AKS, COURTESY OF THE HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN.

myth, mortals, & immortality:



THE MEXICAN CULTURAL MOSAIC

Works from Museo Soumaya de México

The Smithsonian Latino Center celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month by highlighting Mexican art and culture with “Myth, Mortals, and Immortality: Works from Museo Soumaya de México.” The exhibition was on view at the Smithsonian International Gallery from September 13 through November 2, and showcased works of art from the 17th to 20th century by some of Mexico’s most renowned artists, including Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, José Agustín Arrieta, Juan Soriano and David Alfaro Siqueiros.



Anchoring the show was the original thirty footsketch by Diego Rivera for the mural "Nightmare of War, Dream of Peace."



The show was curated by Monica López-Velarde Estrada and Alfonso Miranda Márquez from the Museo Soumaya in close collaboration with Joanne Flores and Emily Key from the Smithsonian Latino Center and Seth Waite from the Smithsonian International Gallery. Organized into ten thematic sections, the artwork was carefully selected to demonstrate the various influences, such as the indigenous, European, Asian, and African, and important symbols and legends, which combine to form the diverse cultural mosaic of Mexico's identity.

Anchoring the show was the original thirty-foot sketch by Diego Rivera for the mural "Nightmare of War, Dream of Peace." The mural was commissioned in 1952 by El Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (The National Institute of Fine Arts). An exemplary piece from the Mexican School of Painting, Rivera introduced a Mexican perspective on world affairs and condemned the West and its abuses towards the working class. Censured by the Mexican authorities because of its highly sensitive socio-political commentary, the mural became part of a traveling exhibition to countries behind the Iron Curtain. Upon its return to Mexico City, the mural was discovered missing. It is believed that the mural was destroyed in China during Mao's Cultural Revolution. All that remains is the original sketch which was on view during the exhibition.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, renowned Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo presents a different approach to art. Unlike his colleagues in the Mexican School of Painting,

Tamayo focused on color and form rather than political or social commentary. Exemplifying this idea is his "Watermelon Vendor," in which the vendor is depicted as a conductor, directing an orchestra of fruit. The red, white, and green of the watermelon reflect the symbolic colors of the Mexican flag and the central colors of the country's national identity. The seeds of the watermelon symbolize the citizenry of Mexico. All these elements come together to form the "Concert of Mexico", with the vendor conducting, leading, and uniting the different cultures to form one people and one culture in Mexico.

Through the exhibition, audiences were exposed to the multiple facets of Mexican life and culture. From the indigenous myths and the role of the Catholic religion, to the modern day commentary and use of art to portray everyday life, the mysteries, ideas, and influences that form the Mexican identity were revealed. During its run, the show was visited by over thirty-five thousand people and more than one thousand students and teachers, whom took part in interactive tours with Smithsonian Latino Center educational staff. The exhibition and the tours allowed the visitor (Latino and Non-Latino) to learn more about its neighbor and how many threads are woven together to form the cultural fabric of *lo Mexicano*. ✨



OPPOSITE: VIEW OF THE DIEGO RIVERA SKETCH AT THE SMITHSONIAN INTERNATIONAL GALLERY, PHOTO BY JUAN CARLOS BRICEÑO. THIS COPY IS FOR YOU TO LOOK AT BUT IT IS NOT TO READ. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** JORGE GONZÁLEZ CAMARENA, UNTITLED, OIL ON CANVAS, COLECCIÓN MUSEO SOUMAYA. **ABOVE CENTER:** RUFINO TAMAYO, "VENDEDOR DE SANDÍAS," GOUACHE ON PAPER, © D.R. RUFINO TAMAYO / HEREDEROS / MÉXICO / 2006. FUNDACIÓN OLGA Y RUFINO TAMAYO, A.C.



*¡Smithsonian
Con Sabor!
September Gala*

THE SMITHSONIAN CASTLE,
WASHINGTON, D.C.



¡SMITHSONIAN CON SABOR! SEPTEMBER GALA **a.** Colombian dancers—El Tayrona. **b.** Univision SVP Ivelisse Estrada, Pilar O'Leary, Smithsonian Latino Center Director, and Colombian Coffee Icon Juan Valdez. **c.** Senator Mel Martinez, Mexican Ambassador Carlos de Icaza and Mrs. de Icaza, Colombian Ambassador Carolina Barco **d.** Secretary Larry Small, Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Director Pilar O'Leary. **e.** View of the Castle gardens. **f.** Gala Honorees: Mo Rocca, Patricia Cardoso and Esteban Cortazar with Pilar O'Leary, Secretary Larry Small and Colombian Ambassador Carolina Barco **g.** Cristina Saralegui and Cheech Marin. **h.** Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen being honored. **i.** Representative Xavier Becerra and Smithsonian National Latino Board Chair Henry Muñoz III and Board Member Gloria Rodriguez.

Smithsonian Con Sabor Colombiano

MO ROCCA—ON BEING HONORED AT ¡SMITHSONIAN CON SABOR!

The ¡Smithsonian con Sabor! gala would have been a night to remember even if I had not been honored. Growing up in D.C., I've always held the Smithsonian in a revered light. Its museums are some of the world's best. (Never mind that my parents had to drag me kicking and screaming to them when I was a kid. Could you blame me? The Air and Space Museum rocks—but the Hirshhorn? I'm still trying to figure out how to look at some of that stuff.) The Castle always seemed particularly forbidding.

But the Castle came gloriously to life for the gala. The music, the food, the Colombian art brought in for the event—all of it was so thoughtfully orchestrated. I was humbled to be honored alongside film director Patricia Cardoso and designer Esteban Cortazar. (I was inclined to hide behind them on stage. They are much more likely to pass as Colombian.)



Mo Rocca is a comedic actor, writer, former correspondent for Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" and a regular contributor to NBC's "Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

To have my mother, a native of Bogota, join me was the best part. She has supported every single choice I've made in my career—even the less than stellar ones. (A mother's love is blind.) The evening reminded me that my work in media and the creative arts is not separate from me. It is a reflection of who I am, an extension of my heritage. And my heritage is Colombian. Now I just need to work on my Spanish.

ABOVE RIGHT: COLOMBIAN-AMERICAN WRITER/COMEDIAN MO ROCCA AND SLC DIRECTOR PILAR O'LEARY



“Myth, Mortals and Immortality: Works from Museo Soumaya de México” Opening Reception and Exhibition



“MYTH, MORTALS AND IMMORTALITY” EXHIBITION AND OPENING RECEPTION **a.** Nell Payne, Director, Smithsonian Office of Government Relations; Pilar O’Leary, Smithsonian Latino Center Director; First Lady Laura Bush; Soumaya Curator Alfonso Marquez Miranda; Joanne Flores and Nikki Krakora director of Special Events. **b.** First Lady of Florida Columba Bush and Pilar O’Leary, Smithsonian Latino Center Director **c.** Isabel Lara, Roberto Slim, Alfonso Marquez Miranda and Joanne Flores. **d.** Pilar O’Leary, Smithsonian Latino Center Director with Mexican Minister for Cultural Affairs Alejandro Negrín and his wife, Teresa de Negrín. **e.** Julio Solórzano and Bart Hudson of Florida House. **f.** Nina Oviedo of Florida House, Sheila Burke, Smithsonian Deputy Secretary and U.S. Treasurer Ana Cabral. **g.** First Lady of Florida Columba Bush with Congressmen Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart.

CIMARRON AT SMITHSONIAN—The lively sounds of the music called *joropo* originated in the broad river plain stretching from both sides of the Orinoco River in eastern Colombia and western Venezuela. Over the past half century, radio, recordings, regional music competitions, and government-sponsored educational programs have taken its engaging, infectious sound to wider audiences and helped make it one of the most admired Latin American musics.

Harp, *bandola* melody guitar, *cuatro* guitar, string bass, and maracas combine melodious and rhythmic qualities that reflect its origins in the mix of European, African, and Indian peoples that populated the area over the past five centuries. While the *joropo* has evolved musically in its virtuosic technique and instrumentation, back home on the *llanos* (plains), it continues to be a musical flag of cultural identity.

In 2004, the Smithsonian’s Latino Initiatives Pool Fund supported research and recording costs to produce the CD recording “Sí, Soy Llanero: Joropo Music from the Orinoco Plains of Colombia by Grupo Cimarrón.” Smithsonian Folkways Recordings (www.folkways.si.edu), the national museum’s nonprofit

record label, selected the music to include in its Tradiciones/Traditions series of recordings of grassroots musical traditions reflecting the breadth of Latino cultural heritage found in the United States. Carlos Rojas Hernández, director of the *joropo* ensemble Grupo Cimarrón, assembled an all-star lineup of musicians for the recording. The resulting CD, illustrating the stylistic breadth of the *joropo* in Colombia today, was nominated for a GRAMMY award in 2004 in the Best Traditional World Music category.

Grupo Cimarrón has furthered its collaboration with the Smithsonian, appearing before enthusiastic audiences at the “Nuestra Música: Music in Latino Culture” exhibition of the 2004 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, in features on Smithsonian Global Sound (www.smithsonianglobalsound.org), and most recently, at the opening of the Smithsonian Latino Center’s September 6 “Colombia at the Smithsonian” gala. Rojas, also a consultant for Colombia’s Ministry of Culture, continues to work closely as co-producer with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings director Dr. Daniel Sheehy to develop future recordings of Colombian traditional music.

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Misa Criolla

THE DC CHORAL ARTS SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2007 3:00-4:30 PM

BAIRD AUDITORIUM, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY 10TH STREET AND CONSTITUTION AVE., N.W.

In a special concert performance presented by The Smithsonian Latino Center and The Smithsonian Associates, The Choral Arts Society of Washington under the direction of Joseph Holt will perform “Misa Criolla” by Argentine composer Ariel Ramírez (b. 1921). “Misa Criolla,” composed in 1964, is his most famous work and is one of the first masses in the national idiom. Ramírez not only used the language and indigenous instruments of his country but also the vibrant musical rhythms and colorful harmonies of his native Argentina. This performance also features tenors Manuel Melendez, José Sacin and Pablo Talamante, the Alturas Duo and Carmen de Vicente, one of the world’s only concert castanet artists. In addition to “Misa Criolla,” the ensemble will perform other popular and well-known songs from countries throughout Latin America in a celebration of Hispanic heritage and culture throughout the hemisphere. For tickets and information call The Smithsonian Associates (after December 2006) at (202) 357-3030 or visit www.residentassociates.org.



ABOVE: ARTWORK ILLUSTRATED BY CEILA ANDERSON BASED ON A PAINTING BY NIVIA GONZALEZ.

Visit Our New Website!

TO FIND OUT ABOUT OUR EXHIBITS, PROGRAMS AND SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER VISIT WWW.LATINO.SI.EDU.



Check out the Collections section with links to different Smithsonian Latino Collections including The Costume Collection at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History’s Hispanic Designers where fashion greats like Manolo Blahnik, Oscar de la Renta, and Carolina Herrera and others are featured.

Don’t miss the Latino Virtual Gallery – an online, bilingual exhibition space presenting dynamic interactive exhibitions on Latino culture, history, science, art, society and the humanities. The Gallery seeks to enrich the range and scope of Latino-focused exhibitions available to the general public and to educators in a rich and immersive learning experience.

Find links to information about significant Latino Collections from various Smithsonian museums and its partners across the United States.