

ART RIO '14
10 – 14 . 09 . 2014

OLGA DE AMARAL



Galerie Agnès Monplaisir is thrilled to announce its participation to ART RIO '14 from September 10th to 14th 2014 in Rio de Janeiro. We will be showing in Brazil our Colombian artist Olga de Amaral.

Olga de Amaral's work refers to the South American culture, its mineral wealth, its history, its traditions, legends and fantasies that arised from it.

Some pieces have been acquired by the collections of some of the world most important museums (MET, MOMA, Museum of Modern Art of Kyoto, Chicago Art Institute, Museum of Modern Art of Paris...). Her art, made out of mixed media, has been thought to assimilate the sublimated ancestral tradition of weaving. It is designed, elaborated, soaked in gold, silver and pigments and show us the gleam from the splendid buried resources of the South American land.

Even though abstract, Olga de Amaral's art also infuse the viewer's imagination with the perception of the immense landscapes and the exuberant nature of this sublime, fantastical and mysterious continent.

PRESS

Magali Deboth | m.deboth@agnesmonplaisir.com

A full press release and high-definition images are available upon request.

A complete monograph of the artist recently published is available.

FAIR HOURS

Wednesday 10.09 - Preview

Thursday 11.09 - 1–9PM

Friday 12.09 - 1–9PM

Saturday 13.09 - 1–9PM

Sunday 14.09 - 1–8PM

PHOTOGRAPHY

Olga de Amaral

Nudo X, 2011

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**LECTURE
NOTES
SP-ARTE**
05 . 04 . 2014

BY
GUILHERME BUENO

The choice of the loom from the beginning of Olga's career, as her biographical data tell us, points to- albeit metaphorically - the modern spindle on which her work would set: if the loom is one of humanity's most ancient techniques, it is, on the other hand, in the center of the Industrial Revolution; in other words, her art seeks to relate to her time (and because of that, the loom should also be understood as an alternative to painting in its most traditional sense) without renouncing a unique and non-mechanical contact; in short, the artist still wants to work with the color and be part of the form's creation. It is, therefore, the conjugation of a bauhasian bias that pervades her training in the United States with the fascination and self-recognition of a living legacy, in Colombia; the industrial monumentality intertwines with a manual and unique individuality. This all takes place, however, in a process guided by intuition; her discoveries are made at the same time as the probing and the possibilities discovered with the language chosen by the artist (the loom), a subject to which we will return ahead.

Still considering her path and place in art history, it is important to emphasize two points: the first is Olga having lived the experience of modernism in its fullness. In essence, this emphasizes that she starts off as an abstract artist, and does not go through the usual initiation ritual of transitioning from figurative to abstract, as is often required of other generations or groups. But her passage into abstraction is neither dogmatic nor predetermined by a program, as was the case with some of her Latin American peers, allowing her, therefore, to think that geometry is much more an organic bias and a progressive structure of the form (from the articulation of the weft yarns) rather than an "applied" structure. This also makes us think about the autonomy that her works claim, as weaving is no longer seen as a support which transposed into a painting (as with the old tapestries from cartouches), while exploring the role of painting, either as occupying a smooth surface parallel to the wall, or making it jump into space.

These aspects take us to the second point: Olga is an artist who belongs both to modern and contemporary art. Two critics close to the artist, the

GUILHERME BUENO

Critic and Art historian
Professor at the Arts Institute
and at the Visual Arts School, Rio de
Janeiro, Brazil

French critic Pascal Bonafoux and the North American critic Twylene Moyer, understood it accurately when they showed how her work seeks a monumental presence and scale (compared eventually to the same challenge faced by the abstract expressionists in the 1950s), being characterized as surfaces (Bonafoux), precisely because they enunciated issues that did not deserve to be reduced only to frameworks such as paintings or sculptures. Together with Moyer's perspective, who had compared Olga's approach to language and the need for the verbal and descriptive invention that everything new requires, we understand that the artist's contemporary issues arise not as a rupture, but as a deepening of some of her modern issues. In other words, it is related to the displacement of the loom under utilitarian art towards the visual fullness of plastic arts, incorporating it as a new support and language for plastic arts.

Thinking through this bias, what else makes up this modern deepening (which takes us back to something suggested in the last lines of my first topic)? I think the loom allows Olga to find a solution to a dilemma that has absorbed various artists: the relationships between line and shape, pattern and color. "Drawing with color", i.e., making the form not be a mere colored filling of an area defined beforehand by the drawing (from the spatial point of view also considering the implications in the articulation or suppression of a static structure and segmented figure / background) obsessing artists like Matisse and Mondrian. In Olga, the thread is the line itself and the color, materialized at once; color, besides having its own body, is also indiscernible from the support (the color is not something applied to the support, it is the support). This physical coincidence which causes the line is no longer an imaginary geometrical concept, but something tactile, conferring a further aspect of what was mentioned above as an organic geometry. As such, embedded in the accuracy of Bonafoux when discreetly mentioning the work of the artist as surfaces, we go a step further in relation to incorporated languages and re-cite Moyer - the need for a poetic invention to describe them.

The organic kinetics is revealed at every moment in her work: the shape emerges from a luminosity that paradoxically lies on the surface itself (reason why I spoke of the coincidence between support and form), which, in recent cases, such as pieces created since the late 1980s. In them we can see two characteristics: one, which insists on disclosure of its physical constitution - the threads hang down, and as the piece is not all pinned to a chassis, its weight, its application to reality is not "neutralized". In the chromatic point of view, gold is the challenge of dealing with a color that, in addition to its "full brightness", is, consequently, a color that "does not produce shadow." What is this space that is only light? What are these lights, on the other hand, that either reach the most intense of vibrations (as with the gold), or opt for a quiet, secluded depth - but no less moving and full - like those shown in the Louise Blouin Foundation (London, 2013)?



OLGA DE AMARAL

BY
MATTHEW DRUTT

Olga de Amaral is one of Colombia's great living cultural treasures. After receiving a degree in Architectural Design from the Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca in Bogotá in 1952, she left for the United States to study textiles at the famed Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. Thus began a career that has propelled her over the course of the last 60 years into one of the most internationally renowned artists living and working in Bogotá. Her works are owned by major museums throughout Europe, North, and South America, and also reside in distinguished corporate and private collections. Her art deftly bridges myriad craft traditions concerned with process and materiality with fine art principles of formalism, abstraction, and metaphysicality. She has steadily developed a distinct voice in her field through her command of conventional techniques for constructing textile objects while progressively pushing the boundaries of orthodox understandings of how textiles work as objects in space. She has gradually moved fabric-based works beyond the basic category of woven tapestry —one that privileges flatness, adherence to the wall, pictorialism and an obsession with the organic and physical properties of materials— into a more conceptual practice that embraces strategies otherwise found in painting, sculpture, and architecture.

She employs a range of materials, from silver and gold leaf to brightly colored pigments, all of which refer to the landscape and cultural history of Colombia, which are then painstakingly incorporated into the fabric structures of her works over months of repeated hand application. The resulting objects are hefty in girth, but they cast an impression that is simultaneously intimate and monumental, a phenomenon that is not necessarily a function of scale. Her smaller wall hangings can exude an energy that exceeds their size simply through her dynamic manipulation of weaving patterns and use of color. Sometimes bright, colorful, reflective and biomorphic, while at other times muted, dark, absorptive and geometric, these works exhibit the same capacity for creating the perception of infinite space found in the works of Modernist painters of the last century, from Kandinsky and Malevich to Reinhardt and Rothko. Likewise, her larger scale pieces, both the totemic works and the panels displayed in an array in space, have the capacity to feel intimate despite their size. Amaral achieves this through a delicacy of execution that softens the otherwise imposing presence of these pieces, and also forges a relationship with the scale of the viewer through an understanding of how both art and the body function in space.

Amaral's works feel at once primitive and contemporary; they refer to indigenous traditions found in centuries-old civilizations, but their execution and presentation conform to concerns found in our own time. They can appear ethereal and illusory, while others seem almost petrified by age. It is this duality that lends her work a timeless quality; her art is anthropological, exploring ideas found in the way we understand history expressed in objects and in the way in which we perceive form, color, and material in the world around us.

**OLGA
DE AMARAL**
SYMBOLS
IN HER WORK



GOLD

Gold, when considered in tradition as the most precious of all metals, is the perfect metal.

When considering this idea of perfection, we can remember the primordial nature of the traditional Golden Age, the ages which followed (silver, bronze, and iron) marking the descending stages in the cycle.

Gold light is widely seen as a symbol of knowledge, as the essential yang. Gold, as claimed the Brahmana, represents immortality.

The Aztecs considered gold as the new skin of the earth, at the start of the rainy season, before once more giving birth to the new shoots of growth. It is a symbol of the periodical renewal of nature.

Across the whole of Western Africa, gold was seen as a royal metal which is one of the most fundamental myths... well before it was attributed any monetary value.

It is able to bring happiness when used wisely, notably when used in seeking knowledge, otherwise it precipitates the loss of its owner. This is, however, an ambiguous metal, which also has a dual origin as it can be considered as the key which can unlock many doors; or alternatively as a mass or burden which can break one's neck and crush one's bones. It is just as difficult to use as it is to locate.

For the Dogon and Bambara people, gold is the quintessential element of red copper, itself the original concrete vibration of the Spirit of God, speech and water, a fertile verb.

For the Bambaras, gold also symbolises the purity of fire and illumination.

In Greek tradition, gold is the incarnation of Sunlight and all of its symbolism: fertility - wealth - dominance, centre of heat-love-giving, and the heart of light-knowledge-radiance.

Gold is a weapon of light.

For the Egyptians, gold was the flesh of the sun and, by extension, the gods and pharaohs. Goddess Hathor was the incarnation of gold... Gold conferred her divine survival.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant
Dictionnaire des symboles

**OLGA
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WEAVING

Weaving is like giving birth to a new creation. When the fabric is finished, the weaver cuts the threads to which it is attached to the material and, in so doing, pronounces the same blessing as that used by a midwife when cutting the umbilical cord of a newborn baby. The process is as if weaving was a translation in simple language of the mysterious human anatomy.

Fabric, threads, material to be weaved, instruments used for threading and weaving (spindle, distaff), all represent symbols of destiny. They are used to refer to everything and anything which controls, or has a part to play in, our destiny: the moon weaves our destiny; the spider spinning its web is the illustration of the forces which weave our destiny. Moirai are weavers, they are divine lunar incarnations shaping destiny. Weaving is the creation of new shapes and forms.

Weaving does not only refer to destiny (from an anthropological perspective) and bringing together differing realities (from a cosmological perspective), but also means to create, to remove from its own substance, just as the spider does in weaving its own web.

In Islamic tradition, the material used to weave symbolised the structure and motion of the universe.

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KNOT

The various meanings conferred to the word knot are multiple, but above all we use the notion of placing something into a fixed state, of condensing or, in Buddhist terminology, aggregation. We often talk of knots in many linguistic expressions. Untying a knot corresponds either to a crisis or death, or the solution and deliverance. In literature and religious art, knots symbolise the power which binds and unbinds. They can also symbolise the union between two beings or a social tie, or even a cosmic tie with primordial life.

Knots are, for instance, also used in the case of the Dürer Knoten as a sort of labyrinth which must be followed until one reaches the centre and reaches the solution and deliverance.

Knots are also referred to in Chinese bamboo, which succeed each other vertically representing a hierarchy of states leading from heaven to earth, very similar to those of the Tantric chakra (the nine-knotted bamboo of Taoism).

According to Abraham Abulafia (12th Century), the purpose of life is to release one's soul, namely to untie the various knots around it. When untied, death occurs, which is seen as real life. On a spiritual level, untying these knots means to release oneself from attachments, to access life on a higher level.

For the Greeks and Romans, ornaments in the shape of braids, twists, spirals, interlacing, such as roses, crosses, swastikas, axes, discs, etc. are talismanic preservers.

Knots are a sign of life for Egyptians.

In Islamic tradition, knots appear as a symbol of protection.

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COLOURS

Whilst chromatology has developed much in recent years, particularly under the influence of Kandinsky, Herbin and Henri Pfeiffer, the symbolism of colour has retained its traditional value.

The first characteristic of the symbolism of colours is its universality, not only geographical, but at all levels of humanity and knowledge, cosmological, psychological, mystical, and so on. Interpretations can vary and red, for instance, can be conferred many differing meanings depending on the culture; colours, however, remain media for symbolic thinking. The seven colours of the rainbow (in which the eye can distinguish over 700 shades), for instance, have been likened to the seven musical notes, the seven plants, the seven days of the week, etc. Some colours are used to symbolise elements: red and orange symbolise fire; yellow or white symbolise air; green symbolises water; black or brown symbolises the earth. They are also used to symbolise space as blue is used to symbolise the vertical dimension, light blue at the top (the sky), dark blue at the bottom; red is used to symbolise the horizontal dimension, lighter to the east, darker to the west. Further still, they can be used to symbolise other meanings: black is used to refer to time; white is used to refer to timelessness; as well as everything which relates to time, alternance between dark and light, strength and weakness, sleep and wake. Finally, contrasting colours, such as black and white, symbolise the intrinsic duality of humanity. An item of clothing in two colours; to animals face to face or back to back, one white the other black; two dancers, one white, the other black, etc.; all of these colourful images illustrate the conflict taking place at every level of existence, from the cosmic world to the most intimate world, with black representing nocturnal, negative and involutive forces, whilst white represents the diurnal, positive and evolutive forces.

Alchemy also has its very own scale of colours. In ascending order, it attributes black to material, to the dark forces, to sin, and to penitence; grey is attributed to the earth; white is attributed to mercury, to innocence, to illumination and happiness; red is attributed to sulphur, to blood, to passion and sublimation; blue represents the sky; and gold represents the Magnum Opus.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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BIOGRAPHY

Olga De Amaral was born on 1932 in Bogota, Colombia. At the age of 22, she moved to the United States to pursue her studies and her burgeoning passion for textiles. There, she served as both a lecturer and instructor at several universities across the U.S. before returning to Colombia. She now once again lives and works in Bogota.

Olga de Amaral is a fully integrated artist in her country of origin. She has sourced much of the raw materials for her art from Colombia, a land that has been the crossroads of several civilizations. Leather, gold and silver from this historic El Dorado are delicately woven into her tapestries.

Through her groundbreaking installations, Olga has turned the art of two-dimensional figurative tapestry into a three-dimensional, abstract genre of work. Her pieces, intricately designed and constructed by the master craftsmanship, sparkle with of all of their woven wealth. Light dances across the delicate patterns adorning each installation, enticing to the viewer to take a closer look. Olga's work is exhibited in the collections of the largest contemporary art museums around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, and the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, Japan, among many others.

AWARDS

- 2011 **Honoree of the Multicultural Benefit Gala**, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- 2010 Member of the Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2009 Olga de Amaral Prize awarded at 5th International Biennial of Textile Art, organized by the World textile Art Organization (WTA), Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2008 Honorary Co-Chair for the benefit of the Multicultural Audience Development Initiative, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
- 2006 Olga de Amaral Prize awarded at the 4th International Biennial of Textile Art, San Jose, Costa Rica
- 2005 **Visionary Artist recognition by the Museum of Art & Design**, New York, New York
- 1989 Chair, UCLA, Los Angeles, California
- 1973 **Guggenheim Fellowship**, New York, New York
- 1972 First Prize in the Tercera Bienal de Artes de Coltejer, Medellin, Colombia
- 1971 First Prize in the XXII Salón Nacional de Artistas, Bogotá, Colombia

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

NORTH AMERICA

Metropolitan Museum of Art | New York, NY
Museum of Modern Art | New York, NY

American Craft Museum | New York, NY
Chicago Art Institute | Chicago, IL
Cleveland Museum of Art | Cleveland, OH
Museum of the Americas | Washington, DC
Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum | Bloomfield Hills, MI
Denver Art Museum | Denver, Colorado
De Young Museum | San Francisco, CA
Museo de Albuquerque | Albuquerque, NM
Museum of Fine Arts | Houston, TX
Philadelphia Museum of Art | Philadelphia, PA
Rhode Island School of Design | Providence, RI
San Antonio Museum of Art | San Antonio, TX
The Contemporary Museum | Honolulu, Hawaii
The Renwick Gallery of the National Gallery | Washington, DC
The Textile Museum | Washington, DC
Toledo Museum of Art | Toledo, OH

EUROPE

Musée Cantonal des Beaux Arts | Lausanne, Switzerland
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris | Paris, France

Kunstindustrimuseum | Throdheim, Norway
Musée Bellerive | Zurich, Switzerland
Musée Jean Lurçat et de la Tapisserie Contemporaine | Angers, France
Museum Bellerive | Zürich, Switzerland

ASIA

Museum of Modern Art | Kyoto, Japan

SOUTH AMERICA

Museo de Arte Moderno | Bogotá, Colombia
Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia | Cali, Colombia
Museo Nacional - Cancillería | Bogotá, Colombia
Museo del Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo | Lima, Peru

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

ASIA

Four Seasons Hotel, Hong Kong, Japan
Regent Hotel, Hong Kong

AUSTRALIA

Ararat Gallery | Ararat
Macquarie University | Sydney

NORTH AMERICA

Arthur Young Company | Houston, TX
Braniff International Airways | Kansas, KS
Colgel the Clinton Exchange | Syracuse, NY
Charterhouse International | New York, NY
Dreyfus Corporation | New York, NY
Embarcadero Center | San Francisco, CA
First National Bank | Forth Worth, TX
First National City Bank | Chicago, IL
First National City Bank | Miami, FL
Flagship Bank | Miami, FL
Florida National Bank | Jacksonville, FL
Forth Worth National Bank | Houston, TX
Hilton Hotel | Chicago, IL
Hyatt House | San Francisco, CA
Hyatt Regency | Chicago, IL
Hyatt Regency | San Francisco, CA
Interamerican Development Bank | Washington
John Nuveen & Company | Chicago, IL
Marriot Hotel | San Francisco, CA
Miami International Airport | Miami, FL
Omaha Public Library | Omaha, NE
Omni West Hotel | New York, NY
Park Hyatt | San Francisco, CA
Peachtree Plaza Hotel | Atlanta, GA
Phillip Morris Collection | New York, NY
Prudential Life Insurance Company | New Jersey
Regency Hyatt House | Chicago, IL
The Landmark Group | Atlanta, GA
UCSD Medical Center | La Jolla, CA

SOUTH AMERICA

Banco Comercial Antioqueño | Medellín, Colombia
Banco de Comercio Exterior, Bancoldex | Bogotá, Colombia
Banco de la República | Bogotá, Colombia
Clínica Santa Fe de Bogotá, Bogotá, Colombia
Club El Nogal, Bogotá, Colombia
Coltejer, Medellín, Colombia
Embajada de Colombia | México D.F., México
Federación Nacional de Cafeteros | Bogotá, Colombia
Hotel Santa Clara | Cartagena, Colombia
IBM de Colombia | Bogotá, Colombia
Palacio Antonio Nariño | Bogotá, Colombia
Seguros Skandia | Bogotá, Colombia
Sofitel. Hotel Nicolás de Obando | Santo Domingo, República Dominicana

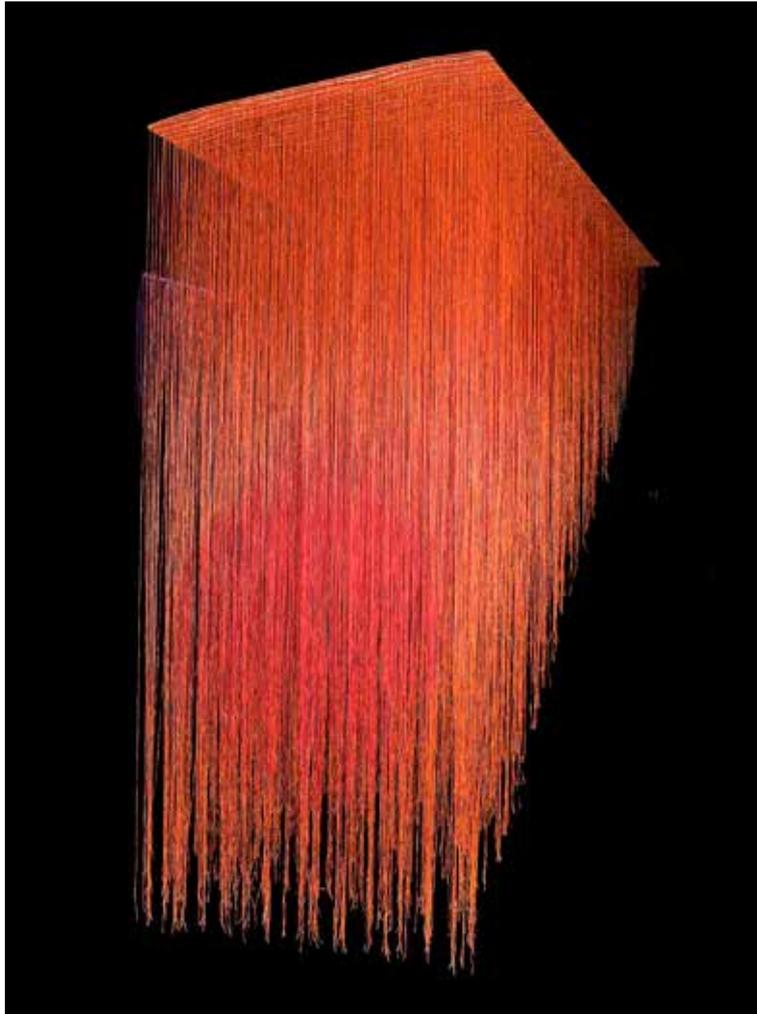
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International Trade Mart | Bruxelles, Belgique

EXHIBITIONS SELECTION

- 2013 "Selected Works". Louise Blouin Foundation, London
- 2012 "Œuvres textiles". Galerie Agnès Monplaisir, Paris.
"Olga de Amaral", Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY, USA.
"Boundaries," Latin American Masters Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- 2011 "VII Pueblos & VII Policromos," Bellas Artes Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 2010 "Entre Pueblos" & oeuvres récentes installation by Juan Montoya, Galerie Jean-Jacques Dutko, Paris, France
- 2009 Plus Ultra al di La' del Barocco, Museo Della Citta'Di Santa Giulia, Brescia, Italia
Estructuras y Esculturas, Jim y Olga de Amaral, Galería Club El Nogal, Bogotá
Jim y Olga de Amaral, Corpbanca, Caracas, Venezuela
- 2008 Golden Fleece, Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel
Museum of Art & Design, New York
One of a Kind, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York
- 2007 Strata, Centro Cultural Casa de Vacas, Madrid, Spain
- 2005 "Resonancias," Centro Cultural de Belen, Portugal
- 2004 "Threaded Words," Colombian Embassy in the United States, Washington D.C.
- 2003 Glyphs, Bellas Artes Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 2002 Tiempos y tierra, Museo de la Nación, Lima, Peru
- 2001 Mes de Colombia, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2000 "Pasos" Bellas Artes Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 1999 Galería Diners, Bogotá, Colombia
Hillside Terrace, Tokyo, Japan
Kreismuseum, Zons, Dormagen, Germany
Textilmuseum Max Berk, Heidelberg, Germany
Olga de Amaral: Woven Gold, The Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1998 Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana
- 1997 Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia
Art Museum of the Americas, Washington D.C.
Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
Bellas Artes Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Rétrospective, Musée de la Tapisserie Contemporaine, Angers, France
Olga de Amaral: Seven Stelae, Federal Reserve Board, Washington D.C.
University Art Museum Downtown, The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1996 Galería Diners, Bogotá, Colombia
Peter Joseph Gallery, New York, New York
Museo de Arte de Pereira, Pereira, Colombia
Nine Stelae and other Landscapes, Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, California

- UNM Center for the Arts, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1995 Latin American Women Artist, 1915-1995 (with catalog), Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 1994 The Allrich Gallery, San Francisco, California
California State University, Todd Madigan Gallery, Bakersfield, California
Galería Pérez-McCullom, Guayaquil, Ecuador
"The Gold Show," Palo Alto Cultural Center, Palo Alto, California
"Contemporary Crafts and the Saxe Collection" (Exhibition catalog), The Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Museum, Washington, D.C.
- 1993 Lost Images, Inherited Landscapes, The Allrich Gallery, San Francisco, California
Elite Fine Arts, Miami, Florida
Cuatro tiempos (a retrospective), Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Bogotá
Centro Cultural Avianca, Barranquilla, Colombia
- 1992 Lost Images, Inherited Landscapes, Johnston Community College, Overland Park, Kansas
Bellas Artes Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 1990 Bellas Artes Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 1981 The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
- 1980 Le Grand Palais, Fiac, Paris, France
- 1977 National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan
- 1976 Musée Ingres, Montauban, France
- 1975 "Arte Colombiano a Través de los Siglos," Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, France
"Superficies," Grand Palais, Paris, France
- 1973 Detroit Art Institute, Detroit, Michigan
- 1972 Museo de Arte Moderno Bogotá
- 1970 Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York
- 1969 "Wall Hangings," The Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1969 Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá
- 1968 Museum West, San Francisco, California.
- 1967 Skidmore Gallery, Saratoga Springs, New York.
- 1967 3rd International Biennial of Tapestry, Lausanne, Switzerland



**PRESS
CONTACT**

Magali Deboth
m.deboth@agnesmonplaisir.com
T +33 (0) 6 45 87 25 09

A complete monograph of the artist recently published is available.

ART RIO

Pier Mauá
Avenida Rodrigues Alves, 10 Praça Mauá
Rio de Janeiro
Brasil

Main entrance of Pier Mauá (in front of Praça Mauá)
Rua Rodrigues Alves, 10 - Centro

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CONTACT**

Magali Deboth
T +33 (0) 6 45 87 25 09

**GALERIE
AGNÈS MONPLAISIR**

8 bis, rue Jacques Callot
75 006 Paris
T +33 1 56 81 83 51
F +33 1 46 34 03 08
www.agnesmonplaisir.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

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