Media Information

VANGUARDISTAS

100 Years of Latin American Women Artists
4 December 2026 to 29 March 2027
Media Conference: 2 December 2026, 11 am

This major retrospective exhibition brings together, for the first time in Europe, over 180 key works by 75 female artists whose lives and work are linked to Latin America. Under the heading 'Vanguardistas', it showcases female artists who, from Argentina in the south to Mexico in the north, broke new artistic ground and radically challenged conventions. The selection of works spans more than a century and brings together well-known artists with those who are now receiving renewed attention or who have not yet been presented to a wider audience in Europe. On display are significant works by, amongst others, Olga de Amaral, Tarsila do Amaral, Claudia Andujar, Belkis Ayón, Firelei Báez, Tania Bruguera, Teresa Burga, Seba Calfuqueo, Graciela Carnevale, Leonora Carrington, Carolina Caycedo, Lygia Clark, Carmézia Emiliano, Carmen Herrera, Frida Kahlo, Maria Martins, Ana Mendieta, Marta Minujín, Djanira da Motta e Silva, Lygia Pape, Rosana Paulino, La Chola Poblete, Emma Reyes, Mira Schendel, Grete Stern and Cecilia Vicuña.
By bringing together temporal and spatial dimensions, the exhibition opens up new perspectives on the art histories of Latin America. Diverse in both medium and content, it explores the significance of independent forms of expression for identity and self-empowerment. The selected works tell of artistic and social processes of change, of broader contexts and personal experiences. Numerous biographies also bear witness to the close links between Latin American and European artists and art scenes.

Processes of transformation form a central theme of the exhibition. In many works, the body serves as a venue for social debates. It exists at the intersection of self-perception and external perception: as a vehicle of meaning, a canvas for projection and a site of violent experiences. At the same time, the exhibition's female-centred perspective opens up a broader frame of reference and addresses struggles for justice and diversity beyond stereotypical attributions.

Spanning eight chapters, the exhibition takes visitors on a journey from a contemporary perspective, from the beginnings of modernism through abstraction and kinetic art to the social and artistic upheavals of the 1960s. The experiences of dictatorship and resistance right through to the 1970s and 1980s are reflected in political Pop Art, conceptual art and media art. In contemporary artistic practices, a critical examination of the consequences of colonialism – which continue to have an impact today – stands alongside works that combine feminist and environmental issues or explore the construction of gender identity.
The chapter 'Roles' centres on power imbalances in self-perception and how others perceive us, and on violence against women. In the chapters 'Roots' and 'Change', works from the early modern period engage in a dialogue with pieces from different periods and places of origin. 'Abstraction and Kinetics' continues these dialogues and demonstrates how cosmologies, as well as urban and plant structures, are explored through various forms of geometric and organic abstraction. Central themes of the chapters 'The Exposed Body' and 'Silence' are state violence, loss and resistance, as well as the continuity of

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colonial racialisation. ‘Rituals’ explores the significance of physicality in moments when the boundaries of the self dissolve, making way for a shared experience of spirituality. ‘Wounds’ examines the enduring consequences of coloniality in contemporary artistic practices, alongside works centred on the theme of healing.
For decades, female artists had virtually no access to exhibitions or institutional recognition within the established art world. Patriarchal structures and a male-dominated art history have systematically limited their visibility. VANGUARDISTAS demonstrates that, despite these circumstances, Latin American female artists have developed significant, independent practices that place social, political and personal experiences at the centre and open up new critical perspectives.

The broad temporal scope also illustrates how narratives evolve: until the recent past, Black and Indigenous artists were frequently marginalised by Eurocentric art-historical canons. In current discussions, these one-sided and exclusionary criteria are being renegotiated, and the relevance of these artists is coming to the fore.
Across generations, it becomes clear just how central a role Latin American women artists play in cultural change, social participation and democratic developments – and how, in the face of pressing contemporary issues, they continue to provide important impetus for change to this day.

High-calibre international loans from the following major (private) collections and museums make this exhibition an outstanding international cultural event: Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, the Itaú Bank Collection, Malba – Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, the Fernanda Feitosa and Heitor Martins Collection in Brazil, the Andrés Blaisten Collection in Mexico, the Pérez Simón Collection, the FEMSA Collection, the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection in Miami, the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) in New York, as well as the Collection Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain Collection in Paris, the Tate, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The comprehensive and richly illustrated exhibition catalogue, published in German and English (304 pp., approx. 290 illustrations) is published by Hirmer Verlag, Munich, and features essays by the renowned Latin American authors Gênese Andrade, María Amalia García, Andrea Giunta, Julieta González, Lorraine Mendes and Ayelen Pagnanelli, as well as an introduction by the curator Heike van den Valentyn and a chronology by Anamaría Pazmiño. The authors of the short texts on the participating artists are Tere Arcq, Florencia Battiti, Sonia Becce, David Caliz, Chiara Dröge, Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Andrei Fernández, Susanne Kleine, Miguel A. López, Ana Maria Maia, Géraldine Meyer, Franciska Nowel Camino, Anamaría Pazmiño, Yuri Quevedo, Isabella Rjeille, Verónica Rossi, Stephanie Seidel, Igor Simões, Regina Teixeira de Barros, Alice Wilke and María Wills Londoño. The catalogue was designed by the Brazilian graphic designer Flávia Nalon.

An exhibition of the Bundeskunsthalle, the Kunstmuseum Basel, the EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art and the Bozar – Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels

Curator: Heike van den Valentyn
General Coordinator: Cristina Sommer
Exhibition curator Bundeskunsthalle: Susanne Kleine

The exhibition will also be shown at the
Kunstmuseum Basel 1 May – 5 September 2027
Espoo Museum of Modern Art 8 October 2027 – 30 January 2028
Bozar – Centre for Fine Arts 1 March – 23 July 2028

Participating artists:
Claudia Alarcón & Silät, Gertrudes Altschul, Olga de Amaral, Tarsila do Amaral, Claudia Andujar, Maria Auxiliadora da Silva, Belkis Ayón, Judith Bacci, Firelei Báez, Martha Boto, Tania Bruguera, Teresa Burga, Feliza Bursztyn, Seba Calfuqueo, Delia Cancela, Graciela Carnevale, Leonora Carrington, Claudia Casarino, Mariana Castillo Deball, Carolina Caycedo, Elda Cerrato, Lygia Clark, Olga Costa, Minerva Cuevas, Djanira da Motta e Silva, Carmézia Emiliano, Cristina Flores Pescorán, María Freire, Regina José Galindo, Gego, Anna Bella Geiger, Gabriela Golder, Sonia Gomes, Beatriz González, Carmen Herrera, Julia Isídrez, Graciela Iturbide, Maria Izquierdo, Frida Kahlo, Diyi Laañ, La Chola Poblete, Judith Lauand, Rosilene Luduvico, Anna Maria Maiolino, Anita Malfatti, Teresa Margolles, Maria Martins, Mónica Mayer, Ana Mendieta, Beatriz Milhazes, Marta Minujín, Tina Modotti, Marina Nuñez del Prado, Lygia Pape, Rosana Paulino, Amelia Peláez, Alicia Penalba, Wanda Pimentel, Liliana Porter, Lidy Prati, Emma Reyes, Lotty Rosenfeld, Graciela Sacco, Zilla Sánchez, Mira Schendel, Loló Soldevilla, Grete Stern, Clarissa Tossin, Adriana Varejão, Sandra Vásquez de la Horra, Cecilia Vicuña, Mary Vieira, Yente

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