



SM Concept

Carlos MERIDA "Figuras Abstractas"



Carlos MERIDA(1891-1984) "Figuras Abstractas" (1978)

Important Tableau De l'artiste Carlos Merida, mixed media sur Papier. Signé et daté 1978.

Dimension 57cm x 75 cm.

Provenance : Private Collection, Los Angeles.

Bonhams : Modern, contemporary and Latin American Art ,November 2004 Los Angeles.

Sotheby's Latin America Modern Art Sale 2017

SM CONCEPT +33 (0) 6 31 07 80 30 . smconcept.paris@gmail.com

SMC Gallery 17 Rue du Plâtre 75004 PARIS

BIOGRAPHY

Carlos Mérida was born in Guatemala in 1891. Mérida was born to a family from Quetzaltenango, boasting a Maya and Zapotec heritage which was often an inspiration in his art. He began studying music (his early passion) but became hearing-impaired due to illness. He then changed to the visual arts. He grew up in Quetzaltenango but upon graduating from high school in 1909 he moved in Guatemala City where he began to make contacts among the intelligentsia, including Jaime Sabartes (biographer of Pablo Picasso) and the painter Carlos Valenti. Mérida studied at the Instituto de Artes y Artesanías in Guatemala City. In 1910 he accompanied his friend Valenti to Paris, where he met Picasso. However just 4 months after arriving, Valenti shot himself dead, an event that greatly affected Mérida. After traveling through Europe, he returned to Guatemala in 1914 and had his first exhibition. In 1919 he moved to México and married Dalilla Gálvez (with whom he remained married until her death in 1974) but because the marriage was against the wishes of her family, they made their home in México where he became active in the Mexican mural painting school. In 1922 Mérida worked with Diego Rivera to paint the murals of the Anfiteatro Bolívar in Mexico City, and together with Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros founded the Union of Workers, Technicians, Painters and Sculptors. His first mural as a solo artist was his commission in 1923 to paint the Children's Library of the Ministry of Public Education ("Little Red Riding Hood and the Four Elements"). In 1927, after another stint in Paris familiarizing himself with Paul Klee & Joan Miró, he abandoned his figurative style to become one of México's first non-figurative artists. On his return from Paris in 1929, he was named the director of the gallery of Mexico's National Theatre. His later works formed a link to the Mayan world with geometric elements. He integrated into his paintings indigenous "papel amate" (bark wood paper). His mural for the Presidente Juárez building (1952) depicted a series of Mexican creation myths. 1940 saw his participation in the International Surrealist Exhibition that took place in Mexico and in 1942 he went to teach at the North Texas State Teachers College in Denton (now the University of North Texas). In 1949 Mérida began to research the integration of different arts and from the 1950s onwards his art began to show a Constructivist tone, which was demonstrated in murals and mosaics (often using materials like glass) such as for the Alianza Insurance building in Mexico City (1953) and the City Hall of Guatemala City (1956). His later career also saw Mérida dividing his time between commissions in Mexico and in his native Guatemala, with occasional forays elsewhere (e.g. a glass wall in the Civic Center in San Antonio, Texas). As well as installation art like murals and mosaics, Mérida continued to paint on canvas and also to produce silk-screens and lithographs, principal among which are albums such as *Tres Motivos* (1936) and *Trajes Indígenas de Guatemala*. Mérida's first love was music and he never lost touch with that world; he helped found the School of Dance at the Ministry of Public Education (in Mexico) and later became its director. His visual art was said to be "musical", with series of paintings that were variations upon a theme much as composers do in music. His second daughter Ana Mérida became an important Mexican ballet dancer and choreographer.