

FRANCISCO "PACO" ZUNIGA

1928-1998 BORN : SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA
SCULPTOR, PRINTMAKER, DRAFTSMAN, TEACHER

MUSEUM PIECES: " MADRE CON NINO", 1982, MAHOGANY SCULPTURE
UNTITLED PRINT, 1972, CONTE' CRAYON (INDIAN WOMAN)



BACKGROUND:

- 1928-1934 Worked in his father's workshop making wooden religious statues.
Self-taught in xylograph or woodcutting printing technique
- 1936 Moved to Mexico City. His attempt at this time to go to Europe to study was stopped by the Spanish Civil War.
- 1936-1938 In Mexico he was exposed to the artistic developments taking place there through his collaboration with sculptors Oliverio Martinez , Guillermo Ortiz and painter, Manuel Rodriguez Lozano. A resurgence of interest in pre-columbian motifs and the primitivism of indigenous people marked this period.
Zuniga gains local and international recognition by creating monumental public sculptures in buildings and parks across Latin America.
- 1938-1970 Zuniga teaches at "La Esmeralda", the school of painting and sculpture of the National Institute of Fine Arts. Eventually moves away from public art to pursue his own style free of the restrictions and limitations of bureaucratic patrons.
- 1973 Produces his first series of lithographs in San Francisco and continues to create many editions of works on paper with different print shops throughout the world.

Zuniga is considered one of the most prolific of Latin American artists and earned many international commissions and awards throughout the rest of his life.

STYLE:

Realistic-expressionist. Influenced greatly by Rodin, Giacometti, Henry Moore.
Materials are marble, stone, clay& plaster, bronze, wood, ink, acrylic, pastels. His forms are voluminous, larger than life in scale, and may exhibit cross hatched, polished, burnished, or pocked surfaces. The volume of his forms are accentuated by the weight of the chosen material. Facial features are reminiscent of ancient figures unearthed from sacred tombs. The composition of his drawings is often triangular and circular, incorporating the rounded faces and bodies of his subjects into a whole .

THEMES:

His work is devoid of political or religious influences.
He saw himself as "a lone realist in a sea of abstraction". To him "form is what matters"...more specifically, the female form.
He chooses Indian women from Juchitán, Oaxaca, Meridá, and Yucatán almost exclusively as his subjects. For him the eternal female earth force is personified in Indian women. **They are the very expressions of life itself.** He portrays them as dignified, heroic, yet silent figures of strength. His women have serene expressions facing all of reality's problems and uncertainties without anxiety. They are tranquil, secure and incapable of hostility. Their positions are protective, nurturing and life-giving as they cradle their children. The fertile wombs and breasts that impart life protrude from suggestions of clothing and wraps. His subjects are often engaged in daily regional activities. They are often frozen in pensive moods as though passing time or waiting.

TOUR SUGGESTIONS:

Connect "Madre Con Nino" with other depictions of women in the Museum. D.J.Hall's socialites, "Joan", Deborah Oropollo's "George", the female figures in the Colonial paintings on the mezzanine, Diego Rivera's women, photographs of Native American women in the western art photographs and paintings. Compare for mood, attitude, influence of culture, industrialized society, women's role in the family and society as a whole. Look at choice of materials. How does the material convey the nature of the woman in the art? Examine size in the same way.