

Agustín Cárdenas
*Sculpting the 'Memory of the Future'**

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An anonymous installation photograph of the group exhibition “Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters’ Domain,” documents a partial view of two densely-hung rooms in the D’Arcy Galleries (Fig. 1).¹ Lurking in a dimly lit corner, the verticality of a carved wood “totem” by Cuban sculptor Agustín Cárdenas (1927-2001) is echoed in the upright format of a large canvas by Cuban painter Wifredo Lam, titled *Nativity* (1947), hung at center and brightly illuminated.² Though perhaps fortuitous, the juxtaposition of these two expatriate artists, both hailing from the hispanophone Caribbean, raises compelling questions about Cárdenas’s connection to Lam as well as postwar Surrealism and by extension about the reception of the sculptor’s work. Snapped at the onset of the 1960s—a decade emblematic of radical shifts in the contemporary art world—the photograph also records a decisive moment in Cárdenas’s career. Taken as a point of departure, it thus provides a visual record of the significant ties Cárdenas had forged with the surrealist milieu in the preceding five years. The image also registers obliquely how the critical reception of Lam’s work has overshadowed Cárdenas.

The sculptor’s participation in “Surrealist Intrusion” thus establishes his association with postwar Surrealism in Paris, an alliance that was mutually beneficial.³ While providing a viable platform for Cárdenas to gain greater international recognition, the movement also boosted its ranks with a talented young artist whose work embodied core surrealist principles, as much of the critical literature attests.⁴ On the other hand, the surrealist pedigree held lesser sway than it had for the previous generation of artists, which included Lam, whose careers had benefited considerably from expanding surrealist networks established during World War II. A case in point is the Romanian painter Victor Brauner (1903-1966) whose career suffered due to the dire circumstances brought about by World War II, which he spent in hiding in the French Alps to escape deportation. Close to the surrealists in

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Fig. 1. Photographer unknown, Installation view of “Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters’ Domain,” D’Arcy Galleries, New York, December 1960 © Association Atelier André Breton

exile, Brauner never set foot in the United States but his work was exhibited regularly in New York and elsewhere from 1947, when surrealist networks still prevailed in New York. Over the course of more than a decade, the art world landscape had shifted substantially by the time the surrealists staged their 1960 “intrusion” in New York City. Although the international surrealist exhibition generated some buzz in the press, it did little to bolster critical attention to the younger generation of unknowns like Cárdenas. Even Brauner, whose work was also included and had previously received a good deal of exposure in New York, was lumped together with the surrealist neophytes despite belonging age-wise to the group of mainstays. Critics lauded the works by surrealist “old masters” while dismissing or ignoring the newcomers, at a moment when critical appraisal and market interest in surrealist visual arts production had been largely waning in the United States since the triumph of the New York School, itself on the decline by 1960. As a result, visibility for Cárdenas’s oeuvre has been largely confined to museum and gallery exhibitions in

Europe.⁵

The primitivist-inflected abstract modernist idiom of Cárdenas's mature work stands at the nexus between European, Latin-American, and Afro-Caribbean trends. Situating his oeuvre within the intersecting networks across these expansive geographies thus sheds light on the complexities of the sculptor's reception to date. Cárdenas work has been the subject of numerous one-person exhibitions in commercial galleries and alternative art venues as well as collective exhibitions featuring surrealist visual production, Latin American artists or more recently artists of the African diaspora.⁶ Characteristic of the "totemic" body of work exhibited in the late international exhibitions of Surrealism, the carved wood sculptures entertain obvious ties to global sculpture traditions, which were also ubiquitous as a source of inspiration and innovation in defining works of modernist sculpture by artists whom Cárdenas revered, such as Constantin Brancusi and Henry Moore. Many of Cárdenas's early "totems" can be ascribed to abstract portraiture, as their titles often attest.⁷ A notable example, *Mon Ombre Après Minuit* (My Shadow After Midnight), 1963, signals the artist's ancestral ties to West Africa as well as the surrealist tropes of the double and the nocturnal realm of the subconscious (Fig. 2).⁸ An imposing figure at over eight feet tall, the monumental sculpture is informed by the Dogon carvings that Cárdenas first encountered through reproductions in Havana and later in Parisian collections.

If the sensual qualities of Cárdenas's work appealed to the surrealist vision of desire as a liberating force in their quest for freedom and aligned with their perception of the fecundity of nature and the harmonious ties that indigenous cultures cultivated with the environment, the artist's sculptural production, with its striking contrasts, also materialized the Bretonian concept of "convulsive beauty" and its defining conditions: "veiled-erotic," "fixed-explosive," and "magical-circumstantial."⁹ The resolution of opposing principles—subject and object, reality and dream, self and other, life and death—at the core of surrealist thought, offers yet another interpretive lens for Cárdenas's sculptural output. The contrasts held in tension both in individual works and across his oeuvre have elicited widespread and varied responses not only from a surrealist perspective but also on the part of poets and art historians either marginal or entirely unrelated to the movement. For instance, in "Le Monde légendaire de Cárdenas" (The Legendary World of Cárdenas), Édouard Glissant (1928-2011) underscores how "light and shade knit together" in the artist's sculptural universe. The dialogue between distinct and seemingly opposing elements occurs between the slender uprightness of his burnt wood totems, such as *L'Histoire n'est pas fini* (1958, Fig. 3), punctuated by perforations or "ventilations" whose sinuous intertwining shapes create the rhythmic play of volumes and voids which animates the static form, lending it a sense of dynamic motion. The filiform elegance of the burnished wood figures, such as *Anele, Totem* and *Vers la lumière* (all 1960)—which are figurative in that they represent actual or



Fig. 2. Pierre Golendorf, Agustín Cárdenas and *Mon Ombre Après Minuit*, 1963 © Pierre Golendorf

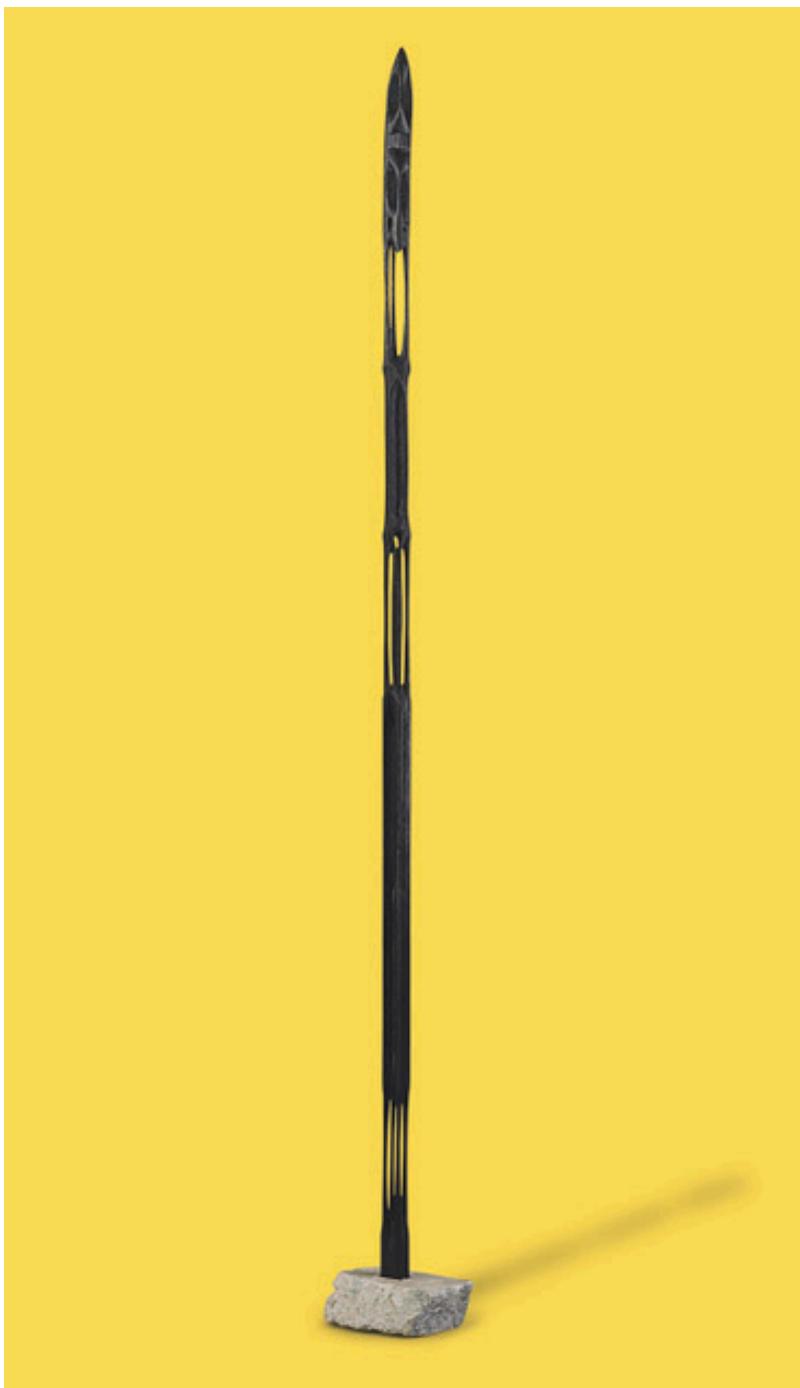


Fig. 3. Agustín Cárdenas, *L'Histoire n'est pas fini*, 1958, burnt wood, 379 x 7 x 7 cm © Agustín Cárdenas Estate

imagined beings—stands in stark contrast to the luminous quality of the rotund and curvilinear marbles that enclose space—*Butterfly No. II* (1959), *Solitude* (1971) and *Fleur éveillée* (1979, Fig. 4), for example. In “Chanson pour Cárdenas” (Song for Cárdenas), José Pierre (1927-1999), a protégé and fervent admirer of Breton, envisions this interplay of light and dark as the nocturnal encounter of the forest spirit who climbs a ladder to the powdery mask of the moon.¹⁰ Luminosity permeates the prose poem “Piedra Nativa” (Native Stone) by Octavio Paz. Dedicated to Cárdenas “who creates worlds out of light and stone,” his poetic illumination of the sculptures opens and closes with the word “light” framing an arid rocky landscape flooded in blinding radiance.¹¹

Some further consideration of Cárdenas’s creative process and actual involvement in the movement serves to bring into finer focus the sculptor’s position regarding Surrealism. In an interview with Marie-Pierre Colle, Cárdenas himself has described in no uncertain terms how the surrealists discovered him and decided his work was surrealist.¹² The adoption and integration of artists and writers into a specifically surrealist genealogy was commonplace throughout the lifespan of the movement. Breton’s writings on the visual arts were ongoing and open-ended—the ever expanding and updated versions of his seminal *Surrealism and Painting* are exemplary in this regard.¹³ Documents related to the organization of the international surrealist exhibitions confirm Cárdenas’s more marginal status, however. For instance, in the checklist for the Exposition internationale du Surréalisme (E.R.O.S.) at the Daniel Cordier gallery in 1959-60, Cárdenas appears in the third category of “Nos Invitées” (Our Invited Guests) and in the “en marge” (on the margins) section of the catalogue.¹⁴ Granted, it was the first collective surrealist exhibition for Cárdenas, who was a relative newcomer. On the other hand, Breton had already signed the preface for the sculptor’s one-person show that year.¹⁵ Although Cárdenas remained at a certain distance from postwar Surrealism, preferring to participate from the periphery, two of his early works—an untitled wood sculpture (c.1955) and the bronze *Oiseau inconnu* (1956)—graced Breton’s private collection, a vast material compendium of the objects amassed over a lifetime and materializing the poet’s legacy. The vertiginous assemblage of natural specimens, flea market finds, surrealist paintings and sculptures, artworks from world cultures gave physical form to his surrealist universe.¹⁶ Showcased among Breton’s surrealist treasure trove—today called “The Wall” and immortalized on public display at the Musée national d’Art moderne/Centre Georges Pompidou—the sculptures enter into an intimate silent dialogue with the myriad of objects while bearing witness on another level to the reciprocal exchange between the poet and the artist.¹⁷

As for his process, just as working in plaster early on afforded him a certain measure of spontaneity, Cárdenas often employed automatic techniques in drawings elaborated throughout his career.¹⁸ Max Ernst and André Masson, who adapted surrealist automatic writing procedures to their pictorial practices, immediately



Fig. 4. Agustín Cárdenas, *Fleur éveillée*, 1979, pink marble, 40 x 35 x 25 cm © Agustín Cárdenas Estate

come to mind, as do precursors like Victor Hugo, whose ink drawings conjure the haunting landscapes of his literary output, or the myriad of surrealist artists who practiced automatism as a wellspring of creative invention. Developing a prolific body of works on paper in parallel to his sculptural production, Cárdenas conjugated a variety of drafting or painting mediums—graphite, ink, charcoal, watercolor, gouache—to formulate visual ideas which resonate with his three-dimensional forms and vice versa. Through spontaneous tracing of lines, decalomania, and transparent washes, the artist abandoned gestural mastery and conscious control to liberate his hand from the constraints of academic conditioning and create amorphous shapes that engender more studied figural forms, perhaps suggesting the emergence of sculptures out of the raw natural materials of wood and stone.¹⁹ In ink and watercolor works on handmade paper, Cárdenas rendered sculptural silhouettes in relation to splotches of ink and nebulous zones of color. Experimenting with looping crisscrossing lines on paper, he also applied the graphic motifs in low relief on the surface of solid wood sculptures created from the mid-1970s, such as *Stèle* (1974, Fig. 5), and *Le Bois de Carrare* (1974). Early examples of painting convex areas with white pigment to heighten light and dark contrasts on sculpture, such as *Mon ombre après minuit* (1963), seem to announce other variations of surface pattern incised into stone or wood and accented with paint. *Ebène incrusté* (1974) with its white amoeba-like forms inlaid into the smooth flat side of an ebony column, a narrow opening carved out of the opposite side and crowned with a bulbous-shape—or *Personnage aux accents noirs* (1976), two rounded forms in pale marble balance slightly askew, one atop the other, with a pair of protruding lumps and black calligraphic slashes. Form precedes language in Cárdenas's sculptural universe; figures come into being before the artist assigns them titles, another common surrealist practice, whereby the poets often titled works in a poetic-plastic dialogue.

Blending masterful treatment of traditional sculptural materials—wood, stone and bronze—and formal innovation drawing from multiple sources, Cárdenas's sculpture fits uneasily into rigid art historical categories, balancing and melding elements of European modernism with aspects of his Latin American and African heritage. Although Cárdenas has been dubbed “the surrealist sculptor par excellence,” his work defies facile labels. Unclassifiable yet firmly anchored in the multifaceted Caribbean region—the work hovers harmoniously at “the crossroads of the world,” between rootedness and displacement, repose and dynamism, at once ancient and contemporary, past and future. Timeless and utopian (in the “no place” sense of the term), his sculptures embody a universal vision that further complicates the artist's position in the context of the postwar art world shift to New York. While Cárdenas participated in several collective exhibitions in the United States, his only solo show, until more recently, was held in Chicago at the Richard Feigen gallery in 1962.²⁰

Secondary scholarship on Surrealism tends to omit Cárdenas, who is



Fig. 5. Agustín Cárdenas, *Stèle*, 1974, wood, 49 x 27 x 10 cm © Agustín Cárdenas Estate

most often mentioned in conjunction with his better-known compatriot Lam by scholars of Latin American or Cuban art.²¹ In his discussion of a modern Afro-Cuban aesthetic, Gerardo Mosquera, who has written extensively on Lam, draws parallels between the two artists, as have others in passing.²² Separated by a generation and working primarily in different mediums— Cárdenas was a sculptor

and Lam a painter—both completed their traditional fine arts training at the prestigious Academia San Alejandro in Havana and subsequently spent much of their careers in Europe, where they each forged ties with the international avant-garde and in particular Surrealism.²³ Tracing Cárdenas's trajectory as it paralleled and crossed paths with Lam's in the pictorial realm offers clues to the sculptor's relatively marginal status in the United States.²⁴ By contrast, Lam has garnered greater institutional recognition and received far more attention internationally than Cárdenas and other artists from the Caribbean region, as scholars such as Michael Richardson have asserted.²⁵ Heralded as a pioneer, Lam was "the first person in the history of Western art to give in the early 1940s, a vision in America from an African perspective."²⁶ He has been recognized as an artist with a universal perspective and credited with providing a model for subsequent generations not only in Cuba but also for Latin American artists more generally, "who seek to reconcile their allegiance to a national identity and aspirations with the vocabulary of modernism."²⁷ If Cárdenas did for sculpture in the 1950s what Lam had done for painting in the 1940s, as has been advanced by some scholars, timing was key for the broader impact it could have. A determining factor in their respective critical and financial fortunes, the generational gap offers a partial explanation for this disparity. Cárdenas's emergence on the contemporary art scene in the United States occurred when interest in Surrealism had all but vanished, most notably in New York. Casting light on the intricacies of the sculptor's scant reception and meager presence stateside thus requires a more robust examination of his productive and fruitful career spanning nearly five decades, from the 1950s to the end of the twentieth century, when his first retrospective "Agustín Cárdenas: Sculptures, 1947-1997," was mounted at the Couvent des Cordeliers, an alternative exhibition space housed in a former 16th-century convent in the heart of Paris.²⁸

Cuban Beginnings

A descendant of African slaves from Senegal and the Congo, Agustín Cárdenas spent his early childhood in Matanzas, a sugar-producing province east of Havana, until his father, a successful tailor, moved the family to Havana. At the age of sixteen, the young Cárdenas was admitted to the San Alejandro Academy of Fine Arts, where he trained from 1943 to 1949 with the celebrated Cuban sculptor Juan José Sicre (1874-1898), who had studied in Paris in the 1920s at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière under the tutelage of French sculptor Antoine Bourdelle. Assisting Sicre on public sculpture commissions, such as the monumental commemorative statue of the Cuban hero for *José Martí Memorial*, Cárdenas received an academic artistic education based on interwar European models, which commingled the classical with the modern in line with the "return to order" characteristic of the period.²⁹ It was also during that formative period, however, that

Cárdenas encountered the sculptural idiom of the international avant-garde through reproductions of works by then renowned European sculptors Brancusi, Jean Arp and Moore, to whom he avows a formal debt.

Swiftly abandoning the more traditional representational mode of his formative years, Cárdenas embraced an increasingly abstract vocabulary while experimenting with different techniques and materials—constructing in metal, modeling in plaster, and direct carving from wood or stone. From 1953-1955, he joined forces with a short-lived cohort of painters and sculptors calling themselves “El Grupo de Once” (Group of Eleven), who took their cue from abstract expressionist trends in New York and lyrical abstraction as it was called in Europe.³⁰ In adopting and adapting the contemporary postwar formal language of abstraction, those artists staked a claim for artistic freedom in reaction to the repressive political regime of Fulgencio Batista (1901-1973). Following a two-person exhibition at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana in 1955, where his sculptures were presented in tandem with paintings by Rafael Soriano (1920-2015), Cárdenas was awarded the Silver Medal at the Salon de Bellas Artes and received a scholarship to study in Europe.

Postwar Paris

By the time the sculptor arrived in Paris on December 25, 1955, he had already enjoyed a promising debut in Havana, having participated in three solo shows and regular group exhibitions, frequently with “Los Once.”³¹ For Cárdenas, relocating to the French capital was the next step along the path in a rising career, whereas Lam had left his homeland in 1923, at the age of twenty-one, on a municipal government grant to continue his studies at the art school of the Prado Museum in Madrid. Once in Paris, Cárdenas took up residence in the Cuban Pavilion of the Cité Universitaire, where he found himself in the company of compatriots, including the Mexican-born Cuban painter of Lebanese origin Fayad Jamís (1930-1988), a former member of “Los Once,” with whom he also shared a small studio on rue Daguerre in Montparnasse. Jamís, who had arrived in January 1955, introduced Cárdenas to prominent figures in the postwar Parisian art world. Of particular importance at the outset was Géo (Georgette Dupin), surrealist painter Alice Rahon’s sister, who directed L’Étoile Scellée and La Cour d’Ingres galleries, both of which were associated with the surrealists and would host numerous exhibitions of artists from the movement’s ranks.³² In his first Parisian show held at L’Étoile Scellée in May 1956, Cárdenas presented recent sculptures in plaster alongside Jamís’s paintings. At the same moment, the sculptor’s work also debuted in the United States at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston in the “Gulf-Caribbean Art Exhibition,” where Cárdenas’s *Lovers*, a 1955 work in wood, was displayed among twenty artworks by seventeen Cuban artists.³³

Although his actual encounter with the surrealists coincided with his arrival

in Paris, Cárdenas would have been familiar with the work of artists in the surrealist orbit while still in Havana, most notably Wifredo Lam, who in 1941 at the onset of World War II had fled to Havana until resettling in Paris in 1952.³⁴ Generationally, Lam belonged to the Cuban vanguard, but upon returning to his native country the painter was snubbed by his Cuban contemporaries after many years of absence and enviable success abroad—his now iconic painting *The Jungle* (1943) was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York the year following its completion. Lam's refusal to participate in MoMA's 1944 exhibition "Modern Cuban Painters" only fueled the flames of their resentment. His outsider status, however, assisted in fostering ties with the next generation of under-thirty artists active in "Los Once." In seeking to stake out new aesthetic and political ground, they articulated a complete break with their Cuban predecessors but identified with Lam as a pioneering figure and virtual mentor. By the 1950s, an acclaimed member of the international avant-garde, Lam thus offered the younger artists a model of artistic freedom to be revered rather than renounced.³⁵

On a more personal level, Cárdenas would also have had exposure to Lam's work on view in Havana during the late 1940s and 1950s.³⁶ The sculptor could have thus observed firsthand how his compatriot, with whom he shared Afro-Cuban heritage, had by the 1950s addressed and incorporated that cultural legacy into his painting. Only after leaving Cuba, however, would both artists initially discover actual material objects from world cultures since none were held in Cuban public collections at the time.³⁷ Gaining access to the wealth of prime examples of those objects in European ethnographic collections and coveted by avant-garde artists and private collectors provided not only encounters with the material culture of their African origins but also a more nuanced grasp of the formal sources of European modernist art. Although Cárdenas had been confronted with racial tensions while living in Havana, he encountered a cosmopolitan intellectual climate in the French capital that attracted leading figures from former French Caribbean and African colonies and generated debate on the socio-political merits of the Négritude movement theorized by Martiniquan Aimé Césaire and Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor. The surrealists demonstrated their solidarity and cultivated alliances with Afro-Caribbean intellectuals and artists, in particular, as well as other members of the African diaspora. In that favorable context, Cárdenas thus gained heightened consciousness of his cultural inheritance, albeit filtered through the surrealist celebration of these other cultures as an antidote to rationalism and the bourgeois values they eschewed. Though poorly informed, their affinities with an idealized "other" also aligned politically with the movement's anti-colonial stance.³⁸

The early 1960s were an extremely fertile time for Cárdenas both personally and professionally. While adjusting to new roles as a husband and father, he adhered to a rigorous work ethic, producing an astounding body of work, adding marble to his repertoire of materials and multiplying exhibitions in Paris and abroad. In

addition, he participated in public sculpture symposiums internationally, traversing far-flung continents to carve monumental works from local varieties of stone in Austria, Israel, Japan and Canada between 1961 and 1964.³⁹ Around the same time, Cárdenas also befriended former dealer, artist, and collector William Copley, an American expatriate who ran in surrealist circles and lived in Paris from 1951 to 1962.⁴⁰ An avid supporter of the Cuban's work, Copley acquired four sculptures for his personal collection: two early marble pieces, *Reflets d'eau* (1961) and *Head* (1963) and two works in wood, both *Untitled* (1965).⁴¹ In addition, the William and Noma Copley Foundation further supported Cárdenas through an artist grant awarded to the sculptor in 1964.⁴²

Founded in 1955, the Galerie du Dragon hosted two one-person exhibitions of Cárdenas in 1961 and 1965.⁴³ A regular contributor to the gallery's publications, Glissant authored the text "Le Monde légendaire de Cárdenas" (The Legendary World of Cárdenas) for the first exhibition in 1961, excerpts of which have been widely reprinted in subsequent exhibition catalogues of the artist's work. The Martiniquan poet renewed his tribute to the sculptor with "Sept paysages pour les sculptures de Cárdenas" (Seven Landscapes for Cárdenas's Sculptures), a catalogue essay for the artist's one-man exhibition at the Parisian gallery Le Point Cardinale in 1979.⁴⁴ Though he never formally belonged to the surrealist group, Glissant frequented Breton's studio and associated with writers and artists, including Cárdenas and Lam, who participated in surrealist collective activities. The collaboration between Cárdenas and Glissant was reciprocal; images of his works on paper complemented Glissant's writings. Published by Éditions du Dragon in 1979, a special edition of Glissant's poem *Boises: Histoire naturelle d'une aridité* with four original etchings by Cárdenas was issued in sixty numbered copies, signed by the author and artist. His drawings also graced the covers of the first manuscript of Glissant's *Discours antillais* and the subsequent paperback edition (Éditions du Seuil, 1981).

In cooperation with the Galerie du Dragon, Richard Feigen presented Cárdenas's first solo show in the United States at his eponymous Chicago gallery in 1961.⁴⁵ Reprising the thirty-two sculptures executed in wood and marble from 1956 to 1961 presented previously at the Parisian gallery, Feigen augmented the checklist with three works lent by local collectors: *Torso*, (1960) in marble from Mr. and Mrs. Weinstein; *Indian Flower* (1960) in wood from the Mr. and Mrs. Arnold H. Maremont; *Antillean Plant* (1961) in oak from Mr. and Mrs. Edwin G. Bergman.⁴⁶ A reprint of Breton's preface for the 1959 Cours d'Ingres gallery preceded Glissant's text for Galerie du Dragon, both translated from French to English by American poet and art critic John Ashbery. Established in 1957, Feigen's Chicago gallery prominently featured surrealist artists, many of whom the dealer met through Roberto Matta or New York dealers like Julien Levy and Alexander Iolas who also promoted surrealist visual art.

While Cárdenas was presenting his work in surrealist exhibitions and affiliated galleries, he also participated in group shows devoted to Latin American expatriate artists in France. In 1962, he was a member of the organizing committee, as were Lam and Matta among others, for “L’art latino-américain à Paris,” held at the Musée d’Art moderne de la ville de Paris from August 2 to October 4, 1962. Showcasing the recent production of sculptures, paintings, and works on paper by over a hundred thirty artists from diverse Latin American countries residing in Paris, Cárdenas exhibited the 1962 sculpture in ebony *Colonne du feu 2* (Column of Fire 2) as well as two watercolors.⁴⁷ The vast survey was repeated at the same host institution in 1965 with the slightly modified title “Artistes latino-américains de Paris.” The Cuban sculptor was also featured in “Sept artistes latino-américains” at the Galerie du Dragon in 1971.⁴⁸ An even broader context in which Cárdenas exhibited his sculpture was the postwar School of Paris or “Nouvelle École de Paris,” as it was dubbed by Charles Estienne.⁴⁹ In group shows such as “Cinq jeunes sculpteurs de l’École de Paris,” held at the Galerie Saint Agustin in 1959 or the annual salons in Paris—“Salon de la jeune sculpture,” from 1956-1971, “Réalités nouvelles,” from 1957 to 1965, or “Salon de Mai,” from 1960 to 1971—Cárdenas benefited from a regular platform for showing his artwork throughout the 1960s. The special edition of the 1967 Salon de Mai, organized under the artistic direction of Lam in Havana, was the occasion for Cárdenas to return to his homeland for the first time in over a decade.⁵⁰

Critical writing on Cárdenas also corresponds to roughly the same time period from 1956 to the mid-1970s. Texts authored by his contemporaries chiefly for gallery exhibition catalogues, which have been frequently reprinted in subsequent publications from the 1980s forward, constitute the bulk of the interpretive literature. Breton’s poetic preface for the 1959 Cour d’Ingres catalogue has been republished most often, thereby serving to consolidate the sculptor’s legacy in the surrealist pantheon of visual artists celebrated in the penultimate iteration of the poet’s *Surrealism and Painting*.⁵¹ Glissant’s lyrical texts celebrating the œuvre of his fellow Afro-Caribbean contemporary take pride of place alongside those of the surrealist leader. Other oft-quoted commentaries on Cárdenas by writers in the broader surrealist orbit include Mexican poet Octavio Paz and French poet and art critic Alain Jouffroy, a fellow traveler of the postwar surrealist movement. Another surrealist-affiliated writer André Pieyre de Mandiargues (1909-1991) cemented Cárdenas’s reputation as “the surrealist sculptor par excellence,” an oft-repeated statement perpetuating the reductive and somewhat misconstrued label.⁵² In quantitative terms, Pierre has spilled the most ink in defense of the artist throughout his career, authoring a total of six catalogue essays that form a testament to his close bond with Cárdenas.

Of his surrealist connections and commentators, Pierre would prove the most devoted and enduring champion of the sculptor’s oeuvre. A contemporary of

Cárdenas, Pierre participated in the collective activities of the surrealist movement from 1952 to 1969, the year of the Parisian group's official dissolution, serving as Breton's secretary of sorts and helping to organize the final three international surrealist exhibitions. The sculptor developed a lifelong camaraderie with Pierre, whom he met shortly after arriving in Paris. The Frenchman penned the preface to his first exhibition held at L'Étoile Scellée gallery in 1956, a mere six months after Cárdenas had arrived in the French capital, and authored numerous other essays as well as the only monograph on Cárdenas to date, illustrated with black-and-white photographs by Martine Franck.⁵³

Closer scrutiny of the surrealists' writing on Cárdenas illuminates the surrealist slant on his work. Pervasive in surrealist art and practice from the late 1930s, the overarching theme of eroticism remains a constant thread running through the laudatory texts by Cárdenas's surrealist apologists Breton, Pierre, as well as more peripheral affiliates Mandiargues and Jouffroy.⁵⁴ In "Cárdenas ou l'Exigence et la Grace" (Cárdenas or Exactingness and Grace), Pierre leads with a reference to the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea, the sculptor who falls in love with his creation.⁵⁵ Variations on the eros theme abound in Pierre's numerous commentaries. More explicitly developing the carnal aspect of Cárdenas's sculpture, the author describes the way he "caresses the shape of women" in a "celebration of loving union."⁵⁶ Along similar lines, Mandiargues frames the sculptor's relationship with stone in no uncertain terms as "a sort of passion or absolute love."⁵⁷ In more recent art historical scholarship, Gavin Parkinson has argued that "the dual preoccupation with eroticism and natural form gives the surrealist context a peculiar relevance in any attempt to theorize his work."⁵⁸ The fecundity of nature with its erotic undertones permeates the much-quoted last line of Breton's paean to Cárdenas: "His fingers have sprouted the great blossoming totem which outlines the curves of a beauty-queen's waist better than a saxophone."

As the embodiment of his Afro-Cuban heritage, Cárdenas's work also appealed to the surrealist penchant for world cultures revered as an antidote to the ruined state of European and Anglo-American civilization, a major current not unrelated to their celebration of the erotic and the natural world. The surrealists' embrace of the "other" encompassed their entrenched anti-colonial position with the issuance of tracts asserting solidarity with popular uprisings, a practice dating back to the advent of the movement when they gathered support for the insurgents in the Rif War against French colonial control in Morocco.⁵⁹ Lines of verse quoted from "Young Couple" by French poet Arthur Rimbaud, one of Surrealism's illustrious precursors, form the epigraph to Breton's preface: "It is the African fairy which provides the mulberry and the lattices in the corners."⁶⁰ Alluding to the sculptor's ancestry and the magical transformative power of his hand, Breton enlists this persistent surrealist trope to lament how modern industrialized society has lost touch (both literally and metaphorically) with the forces of nature. While

Breton's primitivist-inflected discourse is unquestionably objectionable today, it was characteristic of the surrealist belief in the universality of human experience. The sculptor's use of natural materials—at the time Cárdenas was mostly applying the direct carving technique to eviscerated elongated pieces of wood to create elegant vertical “totems,” as he called them himself—also drew obvious parallels to world sculpture traditions, thereby establishing a link across time and geography, a fundamental tenet of surrealist thought. When the Cárdenas preface was published in *Surrealism and Painting*, however, Breton chose to illustrate it with a reproduction of *Butterfly No. 1*, a 1959 marble sculpture, whose voluptuous curvaceous forms evocative of female anatomy cast the artist's practice in decidedly more abstract modernist terms with an emphasis on the conjunction of the erotic and the natural world as suggested in the title of the work.⁶¹

At the Crossroads: Glancing Back and Gazing Forward

Both in his life and his work, Cárdenas circled back to where he had started, retracing the paths he had followed and forged, revisiting and returning to his beginnings to finally depart again. In the 1990s, the sculptor returned to Cuba, where he spent his last years, only to find his way back to Paris, his final resting place at the Montparnasse cemetery in the quarter where he had landed and launched his



Fig. 6. Agustín Cárdenas, *Couple Antillais*, 1957, bronze, 444.5 x 114.3 x 59.3 cm © Agustín Cárdenas Estate

international career. The vagaries of Cárdenas's reception lead us on other routes that run parallel to or crisscross the meandering road the artist followed. It may come as no surprise then to discover that there are currently only two of the artist's sculptures in public collections in the United States, a country that was and still remains on the periphery of his world.⁶² Towering above passersby along a bustling commercial area, Cárdenas's iconic 1957 bronze *Couple Antillais* (Antillean Couple, Fig. 6), often considered his masterpiece, stands like a sentinel at an intersection on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.⁶³

Of all the writers who entered into a dialogue with Cárdenas, the eloquent words of Glissant ring most true, capturing and giving voice to the artist's silent sculpted "discourse." He situates Cárdenas's "solar" oeuvre at the confluence of continents and cultures, of history intersecting with the present, where light commingles with shadow, beings converge and converse.⁶⁴ The sculptor's entire body of work tells the story of these intertwining trajectories, both personal and collective. His sculptures speak to us of ebbs and flows, of interconnectedness, of cyclical rhythms. They invite us to contemplate "the interior landscape that brings us together."⁶⁵

This essay is in memory of Elena Cárdenas Malagodi (1936-2021).

*The title borrows a key phrase from Martinique poet Edouard Glissant's catalogue essay "Le monde légendaire de Cárdenas" (The Legendary World of Cárdenas), in *Cárdenas* (Paris, Galerie du Dragon, 1961).

1 One of the later international exhibitions of Surrealism, "Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters' Domain" was organized by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp with the assistance of Parisian-based affiliates of the movement Edouard Jaguar and José Pierre, and financed by dealer Maurice Bonnefoy in the new premises of D'Arcy Galleries located at 1074 Madison Avenue New York City, from December 1960 to January 15, 1961. For a thorough examination of the exhibition in French, see Susan Power, "Les expositions surréalistes en Amérique du Nord: Terrain d'expérimentation, de réception et de diffusion (1940-1960)," Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2012. For a focused analysis in English of *Surrealist Intrusion* with respect to the American art market, see Susan Power, "Surrealist Intrusion on Madison Avenue, 1960," in *Networking Surrealism in the USA: Agents, Artists, and the Market*, eds. Julia Drost, Fabrice Flahutez, Anne Helmreich, Martin Schieder (Paris: German Center for Art History, 2020).

2 Of the 150 works by some 50 artists listed in the catalogue insert for "Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters' Domain," Cárdenas was represented by two untitled, undated wood sculptures. From the reproduction in the catalogue, one of the sculptures can be identified as *Vers la lumière* (1960); see *Carrara, Cárdenas e la Negritudine*, exh. cat., eds. Elena Malagodi and Eleonora Lombardi (Carrara: Centro Arti Plastichi/Galleria Duomo, 2015), 39. Two works by Lam, *Nativity* (1947), lent by Pierre Matisse, and *Je te regarde* (n.d.), were included. The extant installation photographs, however, only document one each of their works on display.

3 As was the case for Cárdenas, many of the artists whose work was presented in "Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters' Domain" had been included in the 1959 "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" held at the Galerie Daniel Cordier in Paris. In total, Cárdenas participated in three international exhibitions of Surrealism; his sculpture *After the Fire* was exhibited in "L'Écart absolu" (Absolute Deviation), the last international surrealist exhibition at the Parisian Galerie L'Œil in 1965. See Alyce Mahon, *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros, 1938-68* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 186.

4 Since they have frequently been excerpted and reprinted in subsequent publications devoted to his sculpture, texts by André Breton, José Pierre, Vincent Bounoure among other writers affiliated with the movement who interpreted Cárdenas's oeuvre from a surrealist perspective predominate in the literature.

5 Lorenzelli Arte, Milan, 2004; Oriol Galería d'Art, Barcelona, 2006; "Cárdenas: Pièces Uniques," Galerie Vallois, Paris, 2008; "Le monde légendaire de Cárdenas," Château de Biron/Les jardins du manoir d'Eyrignac, Dordogne, France, 2012; Aktis Gallery, London, 2015; "Carrara, Cárdenas et la Negritudine," Centro Arti Plastiche/Galleria Guomo, Carrara, 2015.

6 Cárdenas's work was exhibited in *Afro Modern: Journeys Through the Black Atlantic*, held at the Tate Liverpool, January 29-April 25, 2010.

7 *Anèle* (1960-1973) and *Sanedrac* (1957-1974), two carved wood "totems," are anagrams of Elena, the sculptor's first wife, Elena Cárdenas Malagodi, and Cárdenas himself. Other works such as *Solano* (1964) and *Bouba* (1974) are a tribute to his sons. In this sense, the totemic figures fuse non-objective portraiture and non-Western sculpture registering familial ties and ancestral lineage.

8 These themes are more fully developed in my exhibition catalogue essay; see Susan L. Power, "Rendering the Shadows of the Unconscious: Agustín Cárdenas's Works on Paper," in *Agustín Cárdenas: Mon Ombre Après Minuit* (Paris: Maison d'Amérique Latine, 2020).

9 André Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 19.

- 10 José Pierre, "Chanson pour Cárdenas," in *Cárdenas: 30 ans de sculpture*, exh. cat. (Paris: Galerie JGM, 1988).
- 11 Octavio Paz, "Piedra nativa," in *The Poems of Octavio Paz*, trans. Muriel Rukeyser, ed. Eliot Weinberger (New York: New Directions, 2012), 85. It appears that Paz originally dedicated the poem to French writer and translator Roger Munier, as is indicated in the anthology. Reprinted in English with the Cárdenas dedication in *Cárdenas: Desire and Grace*, exh. cat. (New York: Haim Chanin Fine Arts, 2002).
- 12 Marie-Pierre Colle, *Latin American Artists in Their Studios* (New York: Vendome Press, 1994), 76-77.
- 13 André Breton's *Surrealism and Painting* was expanded to include entries for Cárdenas and other artists newly welcomed into the surrealist fold as well as the poet's writings on the crisis of the object, the exquisite corpse, art of the insane, self-taught artists, and so forth. André Breton, "Agustín Cárdenas," in *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2002), 322-23.
- 14 The first two categories corresponded to the past ("Hier") and the present ("Aujourd'hui") ranks of the movement. See <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100136320>, accessed February 19, 2021.
- For the catalogue, the first two categories were "retrospective" and "actifs." See <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100963350>, accessed February 19, 2021.
- 15 Breton's gallery activities, which included exhibition programming and catalogue essays, were a source of income for the poet. That said, Breton genuinely admired Cárdenas oeuvre as his inclusion in *Surrealist and Painting* attests.
- 16 André Breton's personal collection kept in the studio he occupied at 42 rue Fontaine from the early 1920s until his death in September 1966 remained there until 2000, when the objects either integrated French public collections or were sold at auction in 2003. See catalogues for the Drouot-Richelieu auction, *André Breton, 42 rue Fontaine* (Paris: Calmels & Cohen, 2003). Prior to their dispersal, the objects were digitally photographed and can be viewed online at the Association Atelier André Breton website. For images of the Cárdenas sculptures in Breton's collection, see <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100446910> and <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100842880>, accessed February 19, 2021.
- 17 For more on Breton's *Wall*, see <http://www.andrebretton.fr/en/> and <https://www.centrepompidou.fr/en/ressources/media/ouIVGn7>, accessed February 19, 2021.
- 18 On Cárdenas's graphic output, Susan L. Power, "Rendering the Shadows of the Unconscious: Agustín Cárdenas's Works on Paper," (see note 9).
- 19 On Cárdenas's use of automatism, see José Pierre, "Cárdenas: Images and Aspects," in *La Sculpture de Cárdenas* (Brussels: La Connaissance, 1971), 132; and Alain Jouffroy, "Cárdenas et le fond des temps," in *Cárdenas (Sculptures et œuvres sur papier)* (Geneva: Art Barschi Compagnie, 1992).
- 20 Monographic exhibitions of Cardenas's sculpture in the United States have been limited to commercial galleries: "Agustín Cárdenas: Marbles, Woods, Bronzes," International Gallery, Chicago, 1990; Gary Nader Fine Art, Coral Gables, Florida, 1999; "Agustín Cárdenas: Desire and Grace," Haim Chanin Fine Arts, New York, 2002. His work was also exhibited in "Imaginary Ancestors," Almire Rech Gallery, New York, 2017.
- 21 Cárdenas virtual absence from publications and exhibitions devoted to Surrealism, despite his inclusion in the Parisian movement's later exhibitions and seminal surrealist texts, such as André Breton's *Surrealism and Painting*, can be attributed to deep-rooted narratives circumscribing Surrealism to the interwar period. Some notable exceptions are José Pierre, *L'Univers surréaliste* (Paris: Somogy, 1983) and *L'Aventure Surréaliste autour d'André Breton* (Paris: Filipacci, 1986); Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. by Alison Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
- 22 Gerardo Mosquera, "Towards a Different Postmodernity: Africa in Cuban Art," in *Cuba Siglo XX: modernidad y sincretismo*, La Palma de Gran Canaria: Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, 1996, 391-39.

- 23 Departing for Paris in late 1955, Cárdenas had attended the Academia San Alejandro in Havana from 1943 to 1949, whereas Lam had pursued his studies there from 1918 until 1923, when he received a scholarship to study abroad in Madrid.
- 24 Symptomatic of the skewed reception and consequential paucity of his work in the United States, the 2015 exhibition “Marvelous Objects: Surrealist Sculpture from Paris to New York,” organized by the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC, while claiming that “geography and nationalism have obscured the big picture,” sought to “introduce a more inclusive narrative of international developments,” but overlooked Cárdenas although he was active in Paris and exhibited in surrealist exhibitions both there and in New York as well as Chicago. See Valerie J. Fletcher, *Marvelous Objects: Surrealist Sculpture from Paris to New York* (New York: DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2005), 13.
- 25 Michael Richardson, “Surrealism Faced with Cultural Difference,” in *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, ed. Kobena Mercer (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2005), 68-85.
- 26 Mosquera, “Towards a Different Postmodernity,” p. 392. See also, Gerardo Mosquera, “Modernidad y africanía: Wifredo Lam en su isla,” in *Wifredo Lam* (Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 1992), 21-41.
- 27 Lowery Stokes Sims, *Wifredo Lam and the International Avant-Garde, 1923-1982* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 211.
- 28 Organized by Elena Cárdenas Malagodi from works in her collection and presented initially at Galleria Gruppo Credito Valtellinese (April 24-June 13, 1997) in Milan, Italy.
- 29 Located in the Plaza de la Revolución in Havana, the monument was constructed in 1953.
- 30 For an exacting account of “Los Once,” see chapters 2-4 in Abigail Mc Ewen, *Revolutionary Horizons: Art and Polemics in 1950s Cuba* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); and an exhibition catalogue devoted the group: Elsa Vega Dopico, *Uno, dos, tres.... once: Exposición homenaje al cincuenta aniversario de la fundación del grupo Los Once*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, La Habana, Collection de Arte Cubano, July 11-Sept 14, 2003.
- 31 Cárdenas’s work was also featured in collective exhibitions of Cuban printmaking held in Mexico in 1951 and 1952.
- 32 José Pierre, “Cárdenas: Images and Aspects,” 132. Alice Rahon was married to Wolfgang Paalen from 1934-1947.
- 33 Cárdenas’s *Lovers* was #77 on the exhibition checklist and reproduced in black and white in the exhibition catalogue. See *Gulf-Caribbean Art Exhibition* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1956), 40. Held from April 4 to May 6, 1956 and organized by Cuban art critic Dr. José Gómez Sicré, then head of the Visual Arts Section of the Pan-American Union in Washington DC and Lee Malone, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the first survey of paintings, sculptures and ceramics by artists from “12 Caribbean Republics, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Surinam, the British West Indies and the five Gulf States” in the Caribbean region, was slated to travel to the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, and the Colorado Springs Fine Art Center.
- 34 Between 1946 and 1952, Lam traveled transatlantically between Cuba and Europe, stopping off in New York, exhibiting his work internationally in numerous solo and group shows on the American and European continents. See Lowery Stokes Sims, *Wifredo Lam and the International Avant-Garde, 1923-1982* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 113.
- 35 For details of Lam’s presence in Havana during the 1940s, see Sims, 109-138. For his impact on the 1950s Cuban art scene, see McEwen, *Revolutionary Horizons*, 2016, 47-48 and 111-112; and Vega Dopigo, *Uno, dos, tres.... once*, 2003, 1.
- 36 Solo shows of Lam’s work in Havana: “Lam,” Lyceum, 1946; “Lam, obras recientes,” Parque Central, 1950; “Lam y nuestro tiempo, Paris 1938-1951 La Habana,” Galería Sociedad Nuestro Tiempo, 1951; “Wifredo Lam,” Universidad de la Habana, Pabellón de Ciencias Sociales, 1955. The painter also participated in group shows in Havana in 1943, 1944, 1945, and 1946.

- 37 Although sculptures from global cultures figure prominently in photographs of Lam's home and studio in Havana during the postwar years, Cárdenas only met Lam in person once he was in Paris.
- 38 For an analysis of these issues in relation to Cárdenas, see Abigail McEwen, "Traveling Blackness," in *Agustín Cárdenas*, May 20-July 2, London: Aktis Gallery, 2015; reprinted in *Carrara, Cárdenas e la Negritudine*, July 11-September 13 (Carrara: Centro Storico, Galleria Duomo, and CAP Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara, 2015). See Richardson, "Surrealism Faced with Cultural Difference" (note 26) for a thorough examination of surrealist theoretical principles in contrast to discourses on identity politics, notably Alejo Carpentier's "lo real maravilloso" and Caribbean *créolité* as articulated by Martiniquan writers Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant in *Éloge de la Créolité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989). On the problematics of the surrealist anti-colonial stance, see the *South Central Review* special issue "Dada, Surrealism, and Colonialism," Spring 2015.
- 39 In the later 1960s and early 1970s, he also received commissions for monumental public sculptures around France and in Seoul, Korea.
- 40 Elena Malagodi confirmed their friendship with William and Noma Copley in Paris. Electronic correspondence with the author on February 4, 2019.
- 41 William and Noma Copley Foundation and Collection Records 1954-1980, Series V. Collection photographs, n.d., Box 7, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. For more information on Copley's collection and installation photographs of the artwork on display in his Upper-Eastside New York apartment, see Francine du Plessix, "William Copley, the Artist as Collector," *Art in America* 53.6 (December/January, 1965/1966): 67-75.
- 42 Established in 1954, the board of the William and Noma Copley Foundation included Marcel Duchamp and enlisted as advisors surrealist luminaries and affiliates Roberto Matta, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Jean Arp, Julien Levy and other notables. See <http://williamncopley.com/programs/william-and-noma-copley-foundation/>, accessed February 19, 2021.
- 43 Located on the Left Bank at 19 rue du Dragon in the 6th arrondissement, the gallery operated as a space of cultural exchange run by Nina Dausset and Manou Poudroux from 1946 to 1954 in conjunction with the bookshop La Librairie du Temps. Changing hands in 1955 under the responsibility of poet Max Clarac-Sérac, the gallery was a hub for encounters between writers and visual artists, many of whom were in the surrealist orbit, throughout the forty years of its existence. Edouard Glissant was a regular contributor to the gallery's exhibition catalogues. See Aliocha Wald-Lasowski, "Galerie du Dragon," <https://edouardglissant.world/lieux/galerie-du-dragon/>, accessed February 19, 2021.
- 44 Edouard Glissant, "Sept paysages pour les sculptures de Cárdenas," ("Seven Landscapes for Cárdenas's Sculptures"), in *Cárdenas: Marbres et bronzes, 1975-1979*, exh. cat. (Paris: Le Point Cardinal), 1979.
- 45 *Cárdenas*, exh. cat. (November 7-December 9, 1961) (Chicago: Richard Feigen Gallery), 1961. The Feigen gallery locale appears alongside the Parisian gallery's address on the title page of the Galerie du Dragon exhibition catalogue.
- 46 The Bergman's had an important collection of surrealist art and were close to Lam, whom they hosted in their Chicago home and visited in Havana in 1955. See Sims, 2002, 141.
- 47 See various related documents including the catalogue in the exhibition file: MAM-ARCH-EXPO-MAM1962-LA, Musée d'Art moderne de la ville de Paris.
- 48 Cárdenas was shown alongside his compatriots the painters Jorge Camacho, Joaquín Ferrer and Gina Pellón, Peruvian Gerardo Chávez, Argentine sculptor Alicia Penalba and painter Antonio Seguí. See exhibition catalogue *Sept artistes latino-américains* (Paris: Galerie du Dragon, 1971).
- 49 French art critic and writer Charles Estienne (Brest, France, 1908—Paris, 1966), was an active member of the postwar Parisian art scene, promoting abstract tendencies which he grouped under the term "Nouvelle Ecole de Paris" ("New School of Paris"). He theorized Lyrical Abstraction, the European counterpart to American Abstract Expressionism, and defended the Paris-based painters

grouped under that umbrella. Having met André Breton in 1947, he participated in some of the group's activities related to the visual arts. While Estienne's main focus was painting, he wrote about Jean Arp (Strasbourg, France, 1886—Basel, Switzerland, 1966) and Antoine Pevsner (Klimavichy, Belarus, 1884-Paris 1962), both sculptors whom Cárdenas admired.

50 Wifredo Lam led the initiative to hold the twenty-fourth edition Salon de Mai for the first time in the Americas. At the end of June 1967, Lam arrived in Havana with the first contingent of eighteen international artists and intellectuals including Cárdenas. Another group followed a month later, arriving just in time to participate in the collective painting event organized by Lam and held on the evening of July 17. Measuring five by ten meters, the monumental oil on canvas titled *Cuba Collectiva* featured an immense spiral motif comprising separate sections, each painted by a different artist, with Lam's contribution at the center. Around one hundred art world insiders, both Cuban and from abroad, participated in the festive "happening," performed before a jubilant crowd of onlookers. The Salón de Mayo opened to much fanfare in Havana at the Pabellón Cuba on July 30, 1967, with over two hundred works by an international roster of about a hundred and fifty artists. The accompanying catalogue in the form of a magazine allowed for a more informal spontaneous format than a book publication with contributions by notable writers, a number of whom were in the surrealist orbit: José Pierre, Jean Schuster, Alain Jouffroy.

<https://www.cubaencuentro.com/cultura/articulos/el-ano-en-que-mayo-cayo-en-julio-279858>, accessed on February 19, 2021.

51 André Breton, "Agustín Cárdenas," in *Surrealism and Painting*, 323, (see note 14).

52 André Pieyre de Mandiargues, "Remercions Cárdenas," in *Cárdenas, sculptures récentes, 1973-1975*, exh. cat. (Paris: Le Point Cardinal, 1975).

53 The two-page catalogue featured Pierre's text "La perle noire et le Rubis," printed on red paper stock, and "L'attouchement du feu," by little known surrealist poet Jacques Sénélier, on a contrasting ivory-toned sheet. See Jean-Michel Goutier, "Éloge de la caresse: Agustín Cárdenas et ses amis surréalistes," in *Le Monde légendaire de Cárdenas*, exh. cat., Le Château de Biron et les jardins d'Eyrignac, June 23-September 16, 2012, (Paris: JGM Galerie, 2012), 10. José Pierre, *La Sculpture de Cárdenas*, Brussels: La Connaissance, 1971. Franck's photographs were subsequently published in a stand-alone volume, *Agustín Cárdenas photographié par Martine Franck*, Milan: Franco Sciardelli, 2006.

54 On this major orientation in Surrealism, see Mahon, 2005.

55 José Pierre, "Cárdenas ou l'Exigence et la Grace," in *Cárdenas*, exh. cat. (March 23-April 13, 1962) (Milan: Galleria Schwartz, 1962).

56 José Pierre, "Hommage à Cárdenas" (Homage to Cárdenas), in *Cárdenas: 30 ans de sculpture*, exh. cat. (Paris: Galerie JGM, 1988).

57 André Pieyre de Mandiargues, "Remercions Cárdenas" (Let Us Thank Cárdenas) in *Cárdenas*, exh. cat. (Paris: Le Point Cardinale, 1975).

58 Gavin Parkinson, "Flor de Pasión" (Passion Flower), in *Agustín Cárdenas* (Barcelona: Galeria d'Art, 2006), 24.

59 Durozoi, 126-129.

60 From Arthur Rimbaud, "Young Couple" (1872).

61 Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, 322.

62 Just last year, the Perez Art Museum in Miami acquired *On se parle des choses. Patience!*, a small 1980 bronze. Electronic correspondence with Franklin Sirmans, June 25, 2019.

63 Gifted to the university by Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Loria in 1997. See

<http://artcollection.upenn.edu/collection/art/703/antillean-couple/>, accessed February 19, 2021.

64 Edouard Glissant, "Le Monde légendaire de Cárdenas," 1961 (see note 1).

65 "Le paysage intérieur qui nous rassemble." Edouard Glissant, "Sept paysages pour les sculptures de Cárdenas" (see note 45).