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| Vigo, Abraham (1893-1957) |
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| Abraham Regino Vigo was one of the most talented artists of the first avant-garde in Buenos Aires. He was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, but at the age of twelve began working with his father, a painter and decorator, in Buenos Aires. He studied painting in the Sociedad Estímulo de Bellas Artes like his father before him. During his career, Vigo exhibited individually and with a socially compromised group of artists, receiving several awards and prizes. His articulation between artistic practice and political militancy represented a modernist feature in local art. More than any other medium, Vigo employed graphic techniques, such as woodcuts, etching and drawing. Most of his works were illustrations in magazines, newspapers, and low priced book editions. Engraving enabled the circulation of the images not only in the context of the written word but also among a popular audience. Vigo aimed at a clear, reproducible image, easy to read by workers and separate from the traditional art market. |
| Abraham Regino Vigo was one of the most talented artists of the first avant-garde in Buenos Aires. He was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, but at the age of twelve began working with his father, a painter and decorator, in Buenos Aires. He studied painting in the Sociedad Estímulo de Bellas Artes like his father before him. During his career, Vigo exhibited individually and with a socially compromised group of artists, receiving several awards and prizes. Due to health problems, in 1939 he settled in Mendoza and a year later became an Argentine citizen and, as a member of the Communist Party, announced his candidacy in the provincial deputy race. When Vigo returned to Buenos Aires, he worked mostly as an engraver. His articulation between artistic practice and political militancy represented a modernist feature in local art. More than any other medium, Vigo employed graphic techniques, such as woodcuts, etching and drawing. Most of his works were illustrations in magazines, newspapers, and low priced book editions. Engraving enabled the circulation of the images not only in the context of the written word but also among a popular audience. Vigo aimed at a clear, reproducible image, easy to read by workers and separate from the traditional art market.  By the 1920s, the anti-academic movement in Buenos Aires was divided into different aesthetic lines and ideological groups. In this context, Abraham Regino Vigo joined a group of artists and writers committed to the struggle against social injustice and focused on the human consequences of the modernisation process. The painters and sculptors Vigo met were José Arato, Adolfo Bellocq, Guillermo Facio Hebequer, Santiago Palazzo and Agustín Riganelli. They centred around a socialist publishing house, *Claridad*, located at Boedo street in the working-class suburbs of the city. Then the group was known as *Artistas del Pueblo* [Artists of the People] or *Grupo de Boedo*, in reference to the street of the publisher and the name of the neighbourhood. Group identity was an important thing for these artists both personally and ideologically, in order for them to create a concrete social art movement that would question the established authority of the local artistic field. The *arrabal porteño* (suburban slum of Buenos Aires) and its typical characters were common topics represented by Vigo. On the cover of the magazine *Los Pensadores* [*The Thinkers*]entitled *Aquí está prohibido bañarnos,* [*Here we are not allowed to swim*]*,* Vigo depicted socially marginalised people as seen from a privileged of upper-class resort in a simplified realistic style and limited colour scheme.  In other works, Vigo developed an expressionistic realism aimed at raising the consciousness of the workers, showing their poor social conditions within a capitalist and modern society. *Tierra (vampiros),* [*Earth (vampires)*]is an example of this, as it makes use of a subjective and distorting perspective using diagonal lines and stark angles, with a monochromatic palette, to illustrate the warped and bleak reality of their situation.  Abraham Vigo, *El orador, (The speaker),* 1933, etching, 9.84 x 8.66 inches, Museo de Bellas Artes, La Plata.  <http://mnba.gob.ar/coleccion/obra/8728-11-04>  The artist was also a theatre designer and, from 1927 onwards, conceived sets for independent theatres, such as Teatro Experimental de Arte [Experimental art theatre], Teatro del Pueblo [Theatre of the people], Teatro Proletario [Proletarian theatre] and the company of Discépolo. In the sketches for the play *Los señalados,* [*The marked ones*]*,* by the writer Elías Castelnuovo, Vigo recreated tense and strained spaces through expressionistic resources, a characteristic of his scenic spatial conceptions.  Vigo’s greatest contribution to art was his emphasis on the consideration of art as a medium of social inclusion, which should be accessible to all sectors of the public and could prove a vehicle for the dissemination of working-class issues; ideas shared with the other members of *Artistas del Pueblo.* Vigo died in Banfield, Great Buenos Aires, on 27 July 1957. Selected Works: Sketch for the play *Los señalados* [*The marked ones*], 1928, gouache on cardboard, 13.38 x 19.29 inches, Sahda Vigo Collection.  *Aquí está prohibido bañarnos* [*Here we are not allowed to swim*], 1925, original for magazine *Los Pensadores* n° 4, tempera on paper, 16.14 x 11.81 inches, CeDInCI Collection.  *Tierra (vampiros),* [*Earth (vampires))*],1936, etching, 11.02 x 14.96 inches, Ariel Vigo Collection.  *Fin de jornada,* [*End of working day*],1936, oil on canvas, 47.24 x 39.37 inches, Museo de Artes Plásticas Eduardo Sívori, Buenos Aires.  *El orador,* [*The speaker*]1933, etching, 9.84 x 8.66 inches, Museo de Bellas Artes, La Plata. |
| Further reading:  (Caffarena)  (Castelnuovo)  (Dosio)  (Frank)  (Muñoz)  (Pacheco) |