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| **Vigo, Abraham (1893-1957)** |
| **Abraham Regino Vigo** |
| Abraham Regino Vigo was one of the most talent artists of the first avant-garde in Buenos Aires. He was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, but at the age of twelve started working with his father, a painter and decorator, in Buenos Aires. He studied painting in the Sociedad Estímulo de Bellas Artes like his father. 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 member of the Communist Party, announced his candidacy in provincial deputy race. When Vigo returned to Buenos Aires, he worked mostly as engraver. His articulation between artistic practice and political militancy represented a modernist feature in local art. |
| Abraham Regino Vigo was one of the most talent artists of the first avant-garde in Buenos Aires. He was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, but at the age of twelve started working with his father, a painter and decorator, in Buenos Aires. He studied painting in the Sociedad Estímulo de Bellas Artes like his father. 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 member of the Communist Party, announced his candidacy in provincial deputy race. When Vigo returned to Buenos Aires, he worked mostly as 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 price book editions. Engraving enables the circulation of the images not only in the context of written word but also among popular audience. Vigo’s aimed at a clear image, reproducible, easy to read by workers and separated from the traditional art market.  By the 1920s, the anti-academic movement in Buenos Aires was divided in different aesthetics 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 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 a important feature for these artists, and important in order for concrete a social art to 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. The cover of the magazine *Los Pensadores (The thinkers)* entitled *Aquí está prohibido bañarnos, (Here we are not allowed to swim),* Vigo showed excluded people as seen from the privileges 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 its social conditions in a capitalist and modern society. *Tierra (vampiros), (Earth (vampires)),* is an example of this, making use of a subjective and distorting perspective, diagonal lines and stark angles, with a monochromatic palette.  File: orador.jpg  Figure 1. Abraham Vigo, *El orador*, (The speaker), 1933, etching, 9.84 x 8.66 inches, Museo de Bellas Artes, La Plata  Source: <http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/areas/cultura/arteargentino/05ingles/01sigloxx\_en/  03gr\_28c.php>  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 space conception.  Besides the renovation of set design, the strong contribution of Vigo was his consideration of the art as a medium of social inclusion, accessible for popular sectors and vehicle of working-class issues, idea shared with the other members of *Artistas del Pueblo.* The artist died in Banfield, Great Buenos Aires, on July 27, 1957. List of 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:  (Muñoz)  (Caffarena)  (Frank)  (Dosio)  (Pacheco)  (Castelnuovo) |