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| **Torres-García, Joaquín (1874-1949)** |
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| Father of *Universalismo Constructivo* and founder of the *Asociación de Arte Constructivo* and the *Taller Torres García* in Montevideo, Torres-García was the most important modern Uruguayan artist of his time and a direct precursor to concrete art in Latin America. Based on his experiences in Europe with artist Antoni Gaudí, the group *De Stijl,* and the artists gathered around the magazine *Circle et Carré,* Torres-García elaborated the premises of his *Universalismo Constructivo,* which he would concretise upon his return to Montevideo in 1934*. Universalismo Constructivo* is best defined as Torres García’s constructivist work in which schematic figurative elements are held by a grid pattern regulated by the golden section and a pinwheel structure. |
| Father of *Universalismo Constructivo* and founder of the *Asociación de Arte Constructivo* and the *Taller Torres García* in Montevideo, Torres-García was the most important modern Uruguayan artist of his time and a direct precursor to concrete art in Latin America. Based on his experiences in Europe with artist Antoni Gaudí, the group *De Stijl,* and the artists gathered around the magazine *Circle et Carré,* Torres-García elaborated the premises of his *Universalismo Constructivo,* which he would concretise upon his return to Montevideo in 1934*. Universalismo Constructivo* is best defined as Torres García’s constructivist work in which schematic figurative elements are held by a grid pattern regulated by the golden section and a pinwheel structure. It was considered by North American theorist Clement Greenberg as an example of *all over* painting. Torres-García wrote dozens of books on art and philosophy and was a tireless educator leaving a legacy of more than 500 lectures behind him. The painting workshop which carried his name (*Taller Torres García*) preserved his teachings through a vast production of painting, sculpture, ceramics, wood and iron reliefs, decorative objects, textiles and murals.  At age 17 Torres-García left the Uruguayan capital with his family embarking to Spain (Barcelona) where he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and the *Baixas* Academy before becoming a member of the *Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc*. The artist participated in the construction of the stain glasses of *La Sagrada Família* basilica under the direction of Antoni Gaudí; the decoration of the Uruguayan Pavilion in the World exhibition taking place in Bruxels in 1910 and the mural paintings of the *Saló de Sant Jordi* of the Municipal Palace of Barcelona from 1912 to 1917. During this period Torres García contributed briefly to the formal development of *noucentism* in Barcelona, but quickly moved beyond it, as he strived for simplification, flatness and modernity. Between 1918 and 1926 moving between New York, Italy and the south of France, Torres-García devoted himself to the fabrication of modular wooden toys the aimed at developing in children a new sense of reality and constructive capacities  From 1926 until his return to Montevideo in 1934, Torres-García joined the international community of Paris based artists influenced by Cubism, Russian Constructivism and the art of the Dutch painters of *De Stijl*. In this context and transposing solutions found on his wood cuts to the canvas, Torres-García developed a rustic constructivist style and a polyphonic grid structure preluding his *Universalismo Constructivo*. After an initial contact with the Dutch painter Theo van Doesburg, Torres-García founded the magazine *Circle et Carré* along with Michel Seuphor and the collaboration from figures as Georges Vantongerloo, Piet Mondrian, Hans Arp and Van Rees from which only three issues were published in 1930.  Discouraged by the situation of the art market in Europe, Torres-García moved to Montevideo in 1934 where he founded the *Asociación de Arte Constructivo* (AAC) profiting from his links with important organs of cultural diffusion such as the *Ateneo de Montevideo*, the *Universidad de la República* and the *Escuela Taller de Artes Plásticas*. In 1938 he engraved his *Monumento Cósmico Constructivo*, synthetizing the plastic, metaphysic and pre-Columbian premises of *Universalismo Constructivo* through the hierarchical disposition of emotional and rational symbols engraved on the surface of the pink granite wall.  File: Monumento.jpg  Figure 1. Joaquín Torres-García. Monumento Cósmico. (1938). Pink granite. Location: Park J.E. Rodó. Montevideo  Source: <http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-T7p_twSGAaw/Tda1SeH_LFI/AAAAAAAAAT8/JJrBLK2Ev6g/s1600/parque17.jpg> List of Works *Lo temporal no es más que un símbolo*. (1916. Fresco)  *Locomotora* (1919. Wooden toy)  *Auto de Carreras* (1921. Watercolor)  *Constructivo con Maderas* (1929. Carved wood)  *Planar painting wiht boat* (1929. Oil on canvas)  *Constructivo Ph5* (1931. Oil on canvas)  *Monumento Cósmico.* (1938. Pink granite)  *Stalin* (1939. Oil on canvas)  *Pax in Lucem* (1944. Wall painting) |
| Further reading:  (Cruz)  (Gradowczyk)  (Greenberg)  (Torres-García and Brades) |