Contributor: Rosa Berland

**Sabogal, José (Dieguez)**

Born: 1888 – Cajabamba, Cajamarca; Died: 1956 – Lima, Peru

Long associated with the Peruvian “indigenista” movement, Sabogal was lauded by the Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui as a truly “Peruvian painter.” The definition of the modern and historic concept of the meaning of Peruvian identity was constantly in flux in the early to the mid twentieth century, and as such, the artist would fall in and out of favor with the various factions. However, Sabogal’s representation of the Indigenous people of Peru and his commitment to Peruvian history, including the inheritance of Incan culture, served as the beginning of a cultural preservation of this heritage, and engendered the re-imagination of the “Indian” by generations of Peruvian artists. Sabogal’s oeuvre included murals, portraiture, landscape, and well as scenes of ceremony and procession. Following travels to Europe and North Africa (1903-1908), Sabogal studied at the Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires (1910) and served as an art teacher, Jujuy (1913-18). In 1919, he spent an inspired six months in Cuzco, igniting his interest in Andean culture and engendering painting that took as its subject, the Andean people. These works were shown to both outrage and great acclaim in 1919 at the Casa Brandes, Lima.

Sabogal spent time in Mexico (1922-25), where he assisted **Diego Rivera** on the *Creation* mural (1922-23), in the Anfiteatro Bolívar at Escuela Nacional Preparatoria in Mexico City. In 1928, an exhibition of Sabogal’s work was held in Buenos Aires including *Los Pongos*, a striking portrait of laborers and a foreman, symbolic of the system of inequity that had its roots in colonialism. In 1929, Sabogal displayed art as part of the Peruvian pavilion in the Ibero-American exposition in Seville, Spain (panels depicting the first Incan King and Queen Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo). Sabogal also contributed to Mariátegui’s journal *Amauta* (1926-30) and from 1933-43, served as director of the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes in Lima. Sabogal and Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, Ministry of Culture, founded the Instituto Libre de Arte Peruano at the Museo Nacional de la Cultura Peruana for the study of traditional and Modern Peruvian art.

Sabogal’s lucid and sculptural paintings of the Andean people of Peru include works like the hieratic portrait of a *mayor The Varayoc of Chinchero* (1925), the neo-Cubist *Procession* (1932) depicting a ceremonial process set against a Cézanne-like landscape, and the vernacular *Young Girl from Ayacucho* (1937). In 1942, he travelled to Mexico in his official capacity as the director of Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes and in 1945 was commissioned by the Peruvian government to paint murals for the Hotel Cuzco. The murals depict various figures prominent in Peruvian history including the mestizo historian Garcilaso de la Vega, the Spanish conquistador Francisco de Carvajal, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo Huaco—the mythical founders of the Inca Empire. Sabogal’s murals reflect a mestizo identity, a concept he called “The New Peruvian Man”. The complexity of these images reflects an equally complex socio-political situation in contemporary Peru including issues of disenfranchisement, ethnic identity and the inheritance of the Spanish colonial system. A teacher, leader and cultural preservationist, Sabogal’s work brought the subject of the native people of Peru into the forefront of the visual arts, and generated a dialogue about the representation of Peruvian identity, which fostered the work of other Peruvian artists including Julia Codesido and Camilo Blas.

**Further Reading:**

Greet, Michele (2009) Beyond National Identity: Pictorial Indigenism as a Modernist Strategy in Andean Art, 1920-1960. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Kirstein, Lincoln (1943) Latin American Collection of the Museum of Modern Art. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

Majluf, Natalia (1994) "El indigenismo en Mexico y Peru: hacia una vision comparative." Arte, historia, e identidad en America: Visiones comparativas. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Comité international d'histoire de l'art.

Majluf, Natalia, Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, and Pablo Cruz (2013). Sabogal. Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima.

Sabogal, José (1945) Mates burilados: Arte vernacular peruano. Buenos Aires, Editorial Nova Buenos Aires.

Sabogal, José (1989) Obras literarias completas. Lima: Ignacio Prado Pastor Editor.

Sabogal, José (1975) Del arte en el Perú y otros ensayos. Lima: Instituto Nacional de Cultura.

Schreffler, Michael J. and Jessica Welton (2010) “Garcilaso de la Vega and the ‘New Peruvian Man’: José Sabogal’s frescoes at the Hotel Cuzco.” Art History, Volume 33, Issue 1, 124–149, February 2010.

Torres Bohl, José (1989) Apuntes sobre José Sabogal: Viday obra. Lima: Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, Fondo Editorial.

Wiesse, Maria (1957) José Sabogal, el artista y el hombre. Lima: Azángaro.

Zevallos, A. (1991) Tres pintores cajamarquinos: Mario Urteaga, José Sabogal, Camillo Blas. Cajamarca: Asociación Editora Cajamarca.

**List of Works:**

José Sabogal *The Varayoc of Chinchero*, 1925, oil on canvas, 70 cm x 105 cm, Pinacoteca Municipal Ignacio Merino, Lima

José Sabogal *Young Girl from Ayacucho (Cholita Ayacuchana)* 1937, oil on wood, 30 x 30 inches, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

José Sabogal *Francisco de Carvajal,* 1945, fresco, 160 x 200 cm, Hotel Cuzco, Lima

José Sabogal *Garcilaso de la Vega*, 1945, fresco, 200 cm x 200, Hotel Cuzco, Lima

José Sabogal *Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo* Huaco, fresco, 200 x 200 cm, Hotel Cuzco, Lima