

BERTHA AND KARL LEUBSDORF GALLERY

132 East 68th Street New York, NY 10065

150 Latin American Artworks Displayed at Hunter College By Shaye Weaver

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UPPER EAST SIDE — More than 150 works of art featuring Latin American landscapes, from sweeping views of a valley in Brazil to a delicate watercolor of mountains in Venezuela, are on display for the first time in a joint exhibit at the Hunter College and the Americas Society art galleries.

Hunter College students played a key role in putting the exhibition, called “Boundless Reality: Traveler Artists’ Landscapes of Latin America,” together by researching its artists over a period of two years in conjunction with scholars at the Americas Society.

The large collection is composed of drawings, paintings and photographs done by both Latin American and European artists, who traveled the Latin American terrain during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, many created after independence from Spain was won in the early to mid-1800s.

Each piece gives the artist’s take on the beauty and lifestyles found in Mexico, Central America and South America during those times.

“In the 19th century, landscape painting was incredibly popular and widely done and loved, so really it was a popular and important genre,” said Dr. Harper Montgomery, professor and curator of the show. “The artworks are really interesting because they show the interest Latin America held for artists and all kinds of people, including artists and diplomats, from the U.S. and Great Britain.”



Sunset over Pedra da Gávea, Rio de Janeiro,” circa 1860.

While much of the work was done by amateur artists, who were on commercial expeditions and diplomats visiting the countries for the first time, some artists in the collection are more well-known, including Federic Edwin Church and Jose Maria Velasco, according to Montgomery.

Nearby, the Americas Society has a complete display of drawings, photos and prints of Auguste Morisot’s 1886 expedition up the Orinoco River.

The entire collection had been sitting in the home and storage units of art collectors Patricia and Gustavo Cisneros

In 2011, they decided to collaborate with Hunter College to lend their artwork so that graduate art students could participate in seminars and take part in researching the collection’s pieces.

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"This is a very exciting part of what we do at Hunter in our graduate art program," said Hunter President Jennifer Raab. "We train students to create new knowledge in art history and to understand the scholarly work that goes into a great exhibition."

Raab said roughly 20 percent of Hunter College has some sort of Latin American roots and that it is "amazing to teach people about their own cultural background."

The galleries — Hunter's Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Gallery at 68th Street and Lexington Avenue and the Americas Society at 680 Park Ave. — are open Wednesdays to Saturdays, from noon to 6 p.m. The exhibition is free and open to the public.

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