

July 14–September 7, 2021

# Marcia Schvartz

55 Walker Street



# Marcia Schwartz

Lucy Hunter

Once an old classmate of mine, fluent in nine languages, shared a saying well-known to multilingual people: “A translation is like a woman. If it’s true it isn’t beautiful, and if it’s beautiful it isn’t true.”<sup>1</sup> The expression struck me because, like so many sexist ideas, it revealed more about its own misogyny than its female object of derision. Patriarchy does, in fact, cleave “beauty” from “truth.” No amount of contortion for the male gaze can satisfy its demands for both realism and perfection. Ingres’s painting *La Grande Odalisque* (1814) literalizes this point: the French painter appended extra vertebrae to his muse to achieve her impossibly torqued recumbence. This either-or scenario between beauty and faithfulness is a stubborn pretense for our supposed inferiority, and one that bears harder on the intersectionally oppressed.

After a decade lodged dormant in my unconscious, this old quote resurfaced, as if trawled at low tide, upon seeing the work of Marcia Schwartz.

Schwartz exults in a grotesque fidelity to the world: truth yes, beauty no. Her work vibrates with a psychic intensity that seems to render all subject matter vaguely human. Through this dogged animism, Schwartz insists that the viewer identify with whatever she depicts, whether a warty cactus or a spectral face in a murky riverbed, the carnal absurdity of two lovers in the act, a merciless self-portrait, or a wind-bitten flower from the wilderness of Argentina. The experience of these works is magnetic and repulsive, replete with anxiety and excitement—a moment that Roland Barthes famously termed the *punctum*. For their uncompromising diversity and experimentation, Schwartz’s works seem to issue from a single, clear demand to the viewer. A hostage demand, perhaps: It is not enough to look passively, to be a docile and comfortable observer. You must see, actively. You must stare into the creased visage of a sovereign and anti-hierarchical feminism, one that rejects the airbrushed and revels in the ugly real.<sup>2</sup>

The problems of translation also define the stakes of this essay. My task is to introduce a career-spanning exhibition of Schwartz—an artist who is a household name in Argentine circles—to audiences who have perhaps never heard of her. (New Yorkers can be terribly provincial.) Cultural annotation is thorny business, and I won't attempt a faithful retelling of a career including more than 140 solo and group exhibitions, participation in the Venice Biennale, and a sweep of major awards and honors.<sup>3</sup> For that, I would point readers to the hundreds of articles and interviews on Schwartz published by Argentine writers who expand on her work with expertise and agility.<sup>4</sup> What follows is an abridged account, tailored for US legibility, and punctuated by specific and irrepressible historical events. Schwartz's is the output of a life transformed by tectonic political upheavals. Her generation was riven by state terror under a military dictatorship (1976–1983) whose US-backed coup d'état fell on her twenty-first birthday. The disappearances that followed necessitated Marcia's six-year exile in Europe. Her extraordinary career tracks alongside sociopolitical epochs: a childhood among the intellectual left of the 1960s, exposure to populist and militant anti-capitalist movements in the 1970s, a post-dictatorship underground dominated by queer and punk exuberance, and the thunderclaps of neoliberal boom-bust cycles that have upheaved Argentina since the 1990s. It's a lot to take in, much less to paraphrase. After all, what could the United States understand of roiling economic volatility, an unstable Left whose coalition may not hold, and a militarized Far Right salivating for a coup?

## I

Marcia Schwartz entered the world on March 24, 1955, an Aries child in a Buenos Aires household of leftist intellectuals. Her mother, Hebe Clementi, is a historian, professor, and prolific author whose books (a couple of which Marcia illustrated) address themes including indigeneity and chattel slavery. The artist's father, Gregorio Schwartz, ran the landmark bookstore Fausto, a nerve center in the 1950s–60s for an intelligentsia



with an avowed commitment to dismantling class hierarchies. (The Spanish phrase *comunistas de salon*—"armchair communists," perhaps—comes to mind, given the comfort and privilege of the setting. In any case, if you could not afford a book, Gregorio would lend it to you.<sup>5</sup>) Fausto imported key texts into the Porteño cultural consensus, commissioning translations of Simone de Beauvoir, William Burroughs, and many more under the imprint Siglo XX.<sup>6</sup> The household epitomized the amalgam of cerebral, theory-driven socialism and analytical introspection typical of the upper-middle class Left, for which punks in the 1980s invented the snarling portmanteau *psicobolche* (think psychoanalysis + Bolshevism).<sup>7</sup> Schvartz recollects herself as a rambunctious member of an otherwise staid bourgeois family, but none of us can completely escape our origins. The vestiges of her upbringing pulse through her work in its continual homage to Gastón Bachelard, the French midcentury theorist who asserted that the home is a psychic inhabitation as much as a physical one. Bachelard's commitments to psychology, aesthetics, and phenomenology nestle cozily in the Venn diagram of Schvartz's own thematic interests, and she has cited him as a major influence since the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> What's more, the concept of "home" looms, unresolvable, for an exiled class traitor like Schvartz. The anxiety of belonging stalks this contentious personality, a serial violator of genteel norms. (One example: In the 1980s, Schvartz provided the press with her expletive-laden assessment of a former cultural minister who served under the dictatorship, for which she had to defend herself in court when the aggrieved functionary sought damages.<sup>10</sup>)

Inclined to art-making from early childhood, Schvartz entered art school at the vaunted Escuela de Bellas Artes Manuel Belgrano when she was fifteen, galloping through the rites and rigors of the premiere art school and its tutors. Among her successive teachers and mentors, it was Aída Carballo (1916–1985) who imprinted on young Marcia. Carballo was an *eminence grise*, a master drafter and printmaker who demanded that her students study the human figure with intensive anatomical accuracy. Only with this requisite technical foundation, Carballo averred, could an artist cultivate the



*Plaza Real*, 1979. Graphite on paper. 50 x 65 cm.





deviations and distortions that cohere as *style*. A perennial ward of psychiatric facilities, Carballo occupied herself during her stays by sketching the people around her in their spaces: figures boxed by the walls and gates of wards, confined, wandering, dignified if discarded. Carballo's humane and non-judgmental observations, accompanied by her fervor for figuration, shaped Marcia's empathetic approach to her subjects. Still, Schwartz dropped out of art school without graduating.

In the years that followed she and her friends traveled in the countryside and across the Southern Cone, where she witnessed the poverty of Indigenous peoples and came into contact with groups of left-wing militants that had decamped to the hinterlands.<sup>11</sup> These encounters sharpened her sense of the spirit of revolutionary politics—utopian missions tempered by the fragility of radical political structures—which would endure in her lifelong allegiance to the populist commons.

The painting *Alegría, Alegría* [Joy, Joy] (1976), completed when the artist was just twenty-one, is a testament to her early synthesis of politics and painting tradition. A cardboard pane brims with the figure of a rotund woman holding an infant while her presumable partner, a slender and dark-skinned man, looks on with a grin. This painting marks a precocious expression of emergent vision: a swooping brushstroke cradles to life a paunch that spills from below the woman's hemline, a tender detail that attenuates the cartoonish figure. (Who does not remember the yielding and abundant flab of a beloved grandmother, aunt, or caretaker?) The yellow-gold cap of the woman's incisor signals her position in the working class, and indeed the painting turns on irrefutable markers of social hierarchy. Beauty is a gilded cudgel for enforcing patriarchy, to be sure, but it's also a fine instrument to marginalize the lower classes. Conventional attractiveness is most attainable for the patrician idler, whose perfect teeth and button nose owe to interventions securable only with disposable income. Schwartz does not gloss the indices of the laboring poor, and the painting's formal argument turns on this unvarnished depiction. The triad of figures is necessarily overdetermined by the trio of the Holy Family, easily recognized and infinitely reproduced

across centuries of Western painting.<sup>12</sup> Schwartz winks to this lineage. The baby looks like a tiny old man, reminiscent of the mannerist Baby Jesus of the sixteenth century who often resembles an infant bodybuilder. Further, the man is mestizo or Black, an unlikely biological progenitor of a lily-white child. (Joseph adopted Jesus.) Racial hierarchies run to the core of Argentina, a country self-defined by its European immigration and its unsightly repressed legacy of Indigenous genocide and slavery. Schwartz ports Christian iconography onto contemporary class politics and correlate racial oppressions. Jesus, the beacon of salvation, was himself a dark-skinned commoner.

Even from this early moment, one sees how portraiture provides an intuitive vehicle for Schwartz's broader project. At its core, portraiture asserts an equivalence between the painterly act of figuration, spiritual myths of creation, and psychological self-actualization. Within each rubric, an ethos holds: To *be* is to be represented. This befits a society at once keen on psychoanalysis and overwhelmingly, vehemently Catholic. (the Eucharist rites transmute bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ; in many sects the image of Christ is a conduit for his actual presence.) Hers is a bombastic composite of anti-hierarchical class politics, Christian painting tradition, and clear-eyed if grotesque subjectivity reminiscent of Neue Sachlichkeit or even Francis Bacon.

## II

On March 24, 1976, a military junta ousted President Isabel Perón, replacing that autocratic and often iron-fisted familial dynasty with an even more brutal regime. Upon assuming power, the military dictatorship inaugurated a program of repression and violence. It is approximated that thirty thousand potential dissidents were kidnapped in the streets and later killed in torture centers, their bodies tossed unceremoniously into mass gravesites including the Río de la Plata, Buenos Aires's central waterway. Among the junta's missing and murdered was Schwartz's close friend Hilda Fernández. Sensing the walls closing in—frequenter Fausto's itself could make one a target





*Batato*, 1989. Oil on Canvas. 180 x 160 cm. Collection of Eduardo F. Costantini, Buenos Aires.



*Alegria, Alegria (Joy, Joy)*, 1976. Acrylic on cardboard. 68 x 48 cm.

of suspicion—Marcia fled to Barcelona, where she lived with a friend of her sister and toiled through odd jobs in exile.<sup>13</sup>

Alienated and expatriated, Schwartz was forced to mourn a home country and a friend whose face she would never see again, in life or in death. The military government robbed victims' loved ones of closure, a psychological torture that can be felt as a form of haunting—the classic melancholia, the absent presence of the one who is gone without proof. On the topic of love, loss, habitation, and country, John Berger comes to mind:

The experience of living in you as if you were a country, the only country in the world where I can never conceivably meet you face to face, this is a little like the experience of living with the memory of the dead. ... Nothing can take the past away: the past grows gradually around one, like a placenta for dying.<sup>14</sup>

What Berger does not account for, but what will define Schwartz's trajectory, is the rage of the castoffs and the belittled. Marcia has made a number of works about Fernández, including a painting and a sculptural altarpiece assembled from quotidian and found objects. Since the 1980s, Schwartz's paintings generally depict either live subjects in her studio—or dead women drawn from imagination, the morbid collective memory of the war-torn and traumatized.

It was in the streets of Barcelona, in exile, that Schwartz found footing in drawings of public life. Like her mentor Carballo, she depicts subjectivity out in the open. This is the position of a working class that does not have sitting rooms or thick walls to insulate their moments of love, jubilation, anger. (There is an income threshold below which you know when your neighbors are fighting or fucking, and they you.) In *Plaza Real* (1979), Schwartz draws herself locking eyes with a male lover as a dog does its human—searching, hopeful—her thumb inserted in his mouth. The encounter is framed by the porticos of Barcelona's famous plaza. Vinyl strips of cheap patio chairs triangulate this negotiation of lust and power. Across this period



of drawings, once-magisterial architectural is populated by characters with exaggerated features doing exaggerated things, often sexually explicit. It's the sort of carnal inelegance that strikes a chord of knowing shame, as if hearing one's recorded voice played back. (*Is that really what I sound like?*)

### III

In 1982 Marcia returned to an Argentina on the verge of transformation. In the wake of the Falklands disaster, facing economic calamity, the military dictatorship folded, ending the era of the Dirty War and yielding to a new epoch marked by some semblance of democratic governance. The years of injury and despair ignited an explosive nightlife culture and queer scene for the artists and assorted untouchables who had survived. Marcia moved to the Abasto neighborhood of Buenos Aires, an area dotted with abandoned commercial squats and populated by theater performers.<sup>15</sup> Immersed in a queer and trans art scene, centered around venues like El Parakultural, Marcia thrived in the early years of her return. Her work began to appear in a series of exhibitions, including at the famed gallery Ruth Benzacar. She bore a son, Bruno Castro, in 1985.

Marcia's work from the '80s focuses on portraiture in situ, on people observed from the streets or invited to her studio. These portraits of key figures (including her sister, under her punk nom de guerre Kiki Laplume) comprise a canonical record of an ecstatic cultural moment known as the underground: figures seen as they saw themselves, self-possessed if vulnerable from both within and without. In *Batato* (1989), the legendary performer Batato Barea perches regally on a desk in Marcia's studio amid possessions of his<sup>16</sup> choosing, believable as objects but clearly transcendent as psychic tokens: an enormous ring, a plastic pistol, a clown, a wedding veil. The floral background eschews orthogonal depth in favor of a flat sheath of floating roses, a decorative motif recalling Matisse, as María Laura Carrascal notes.<sup>17</sup> The comparison is secured by the conspicuous absence of corners that might distinguish a figure from a ground.<sup>18</sup> In this foreclosed pictorial



*Fondo L, 2008. Mixed media on canvas. 75 x 144 cm.*





plane, the vertiginous tilt of the desk tips Barea upward in a composition reminiscent of Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907); but whereas those women were mere objects (collapsing colonial Africana fetishism and the patriarchal fetishism of sex work), Batato is realized, his body given literal depth. His thousand-yard stare telegraphs both desire and resignation, an ambivalence well known to the precariat. As if to dispel any doubts over the artist's allegiance to her subjects, Marcia forewent signing the canvas at bottom right. Instead, "BATATO" is scrawled in capital letters, an indication of the painting's title but also a declaration of transference that recurs throughout Marcia's work. (A similar strategy appears in the work *Pino* (Altanero) and others.)<sup>19</sup> This substitution cements the artist's own identification with the lumpenproletariat, and thereby raises the perennial question of what representation actually achieves. Positioning the picture plane as a space of agency and actualization, Marcia implies a hopefulness, perhaps even a faith, in the social project of art.

But Schvartz's artistic and ideological orthodoxy made her enemies in a changing Buenos Aires. A new generation of artists cohered in the early '90s with a smooth and graphic playfulness inimical to Marcia's grit and grime. These young irascibles included Marcelo Pombo and Feliciano Centurión, who gathered around the Centro Cultural Recoleta "el Rojas" under their teacher and maestro, Jorge Gumier Maier. Unwilling to play nice with a scene that affronted her sensibilities, Marcia and two colleagues launched a public assault in a fractious panel discussion in 1993.<sup>20</sup> Insults were thrown, embitterment hardened, and soon thereafter Marcia embarked on another period of exile, this one self-imposed.

#### IV

Amid art schisms and rampant hyperinflation, Marcia relocated to the Tigre delta, north of the Buenos Aires, following the upstream path of the Río de la Plata like a vein to the interior. Far removed from the throngs of city-dwellers that had populated her work, Marcia began to explore new subjects. In this

period, she paints flowers and sculpts cacti as if they too were members of the urban underclass. Describing these floral subjects in 1997, she explained:

It's that they're humans, completely. For me, it's that they're like metaphors of myself, they're like self-portraits ... And these incredible flowers that come out from between the thorns ... and inside fleshy and soft, they are divine, I love them...<sup>21</sup>

Whereas floral images generally impart either a Hallmark softness or an O'Keefe sexuality, Marcia's plants are neither beautiful nor abstractly arousing. No, true to her convictions, these are lumpy *lumpen*, figures whose disfigurements index their wounds and deprivations.

(The 1990s gave rise, as well, to a series of paintings of Native women. There's no elegant way to say it: These works are primitivist in their conflation of Indigeneity, ancient wisdom, and the natural landscape. Any interlocution here risks recuperation, and so I'll keep going.)

Marcia shared a house in the Tigre with the artist Liliana Maresca until Maresca's untimely death from AIDS-related causes in 1994. Once again Marcia found herself bereft of a close female companion.<sup>22</sup> This time, however, the tragedy owed to a different form of government violence, that of international neglect for a deadly disease. In response, Schwartz returned to a perennial theme: dead women floating in water, a knowing nod to Ophelia and to Bachelard, who devotes a chapter of his book *Water and Dreams* to the entrenched psychological symbolism scratched by the self-drowned character from *Hamlet*. Schwartz has painted dead women for decades, including stark works like *La Muertita* (1997), in which an emaciated and sunken corpse is lain out on a morgue slab, her elongated neck craned in rigor mortis. The river, at least, offers the dignity of a gravesite, a pervious habitat amid the shells and the gravel and the bones of a bird's wing.

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, Marcia began adding mixed media to these depictions of women in the river.





*Erinia (el misterio del arte)* (Erinia, the mystery of art), 2003. Mixed media on canvas. 150 x 200 cm.



*De cara al futuro* (Looking to the future), 2010. Oil on canvas. 143 x 103 cm.

In *Fondo L* (2008), the fleeting visage of a dead woman in water ripples from the recycled materials of death itself. (Sand often contains eons-old organic matter from crustacean skeletons to fish poop.) Animal skulls and clamshells frame the connection to mortality in nearer terms. Bachelard, too, devotes a chapter to shells, the portable home: “Shells, like fossils, are so many attempts on the part of nature to prepare forms of the different parts of the human body; they are bits of man and bits of woman.”<sup>23</sup>

In the *Fondo* series, the sand and shells are as human as the flowers and cacti in her works from the previous decade. But this assimilation of the subjects’ bodies into nature does not attenuate the violence that brought them there. Rubble and riverbeds, nature and ecology, far exceed the picturesque. The material substance of riverbeds gestures toward a country literally transformed by the rubble of dictatorship, where never-completed highway projects scarred Buenos Aires neighborhoods with swaths of slum clearance and demolition. Imagine a treacherous Robert Moses project halted midway, without the veneer of fresh pavement and transplanted trees to justify the lives uprooted. (Grupo Escombros, a collective launched in 1988 whose name translates literally to “rubble,” demonstrates its integral position in Argentine consciousness through their street performance.) The flora and fauna that sprang from the ignominious rubble formed the foundation of a city park on the banks of the Río de la Playa in Buenos Aires, near Marcia’s neighborhood of San Telmo. To this day, the remains of untold victims are scattered within the silt and soil Argentina’s waters, consigned to an unresolvable trauma that, like the river itself, structures the civic life of Buenos Aires.<sup>24</sup>

## V

Middle age is infuriating and cruel to women. For proof, consult Marcia’s self-portrait, *De cara al futuro* [Looking to the Future] (2010). A clever geometric inversion enacts the artist’s rebellion against beauty under the male gaze: there are lines where there “should” be curves, curves where there “should” be lines.



She is creased in all the places that Botox enthusiasts shroud in euphemisms, too ghastly to confront head-on: the “elevenses” between the brows, the “smoker’s lines” around the lips. Her jutting collarbones could cut glass. Framed by sinew, her neck is reticulated as if her spine is so eager to reveal itself that it simply cannot wait for decomposition to jump to the fore.

Over the decades, the neck recurs as a physical nexus of unbridled exclamation: heads thrown back in pleasure, in abandon, in rage. *Erinia (el misterio del arte)* [Erinia, the mystery of art] (2003), actualizes rage in the form of a mythical Greek Fury, the deadly predators who sprung from the most gendered of metaphorical injuries: in legend, the Furies sprung from the effluvia of Uranus’s castrated penis. In Marcia’s retelling, the clamped talons of a she-beast expose the viscera of her mortal victim. The monster’s breasts and ribcage are framed by the curve of massive aquiline wings, her head slung back to expose razor teeth slaked with blood. The circular brushstrokes echo the shape of the talons, the wings, the neck, imparting less a feeling of clapping curls than of a clenched fist. Like codependent lovers, Schwartz and social turmoil cannot shake one another. Just as the exigencies of widespread turbulence have shaped Marcia’s life, she too she anticipates and gives form to its cataclysms. Her anger captures a zeitgeist: prior to the pandemic, she produced a painting series based on Dante’s vision of hell.<sup>25</sup>

Whatever it is that makes Marcia Schwartz’s work so unique and bizarre (read: arguably ugly) also frames its relevance and urgency. Consider it from a long view: plenty of art over the ages has rejected the conventionally attractive—this alone cannot account for the gut-punch that Schwartz’s work delivers. Beauty is a fickle cultural consensus, and culture has a way of expertly cannibalizing what it once tossed to the margins. Manet’s paintings were ugly in their time, so were Courbet’s and Picasso’s. What is it, in 2021, that makes Marcia’s work faithful but not beautiful? What nerve is being exposed?

I can think of at least one. A through line in Marcia’s bravely experimental career is her project to articulate a

working class, via the individuals that comprise it. She paints portraits from live models in her studio, inviting people she meets in the public spaces of Buenos Aires, where she stubbornly persists in a once-denigrated but now hipster neighborhood; or those she encounters in the countryside, in Argentina's poorer and more Indigenous north. She depicts day laborers, vagabonds, queer and gender-fluid people, the unemployed. These uncompromising depictions of the Argentina's traditionally undesirable have no scopophilic distance. These are not pity-inducing demonstration pieces or soppy moral fables. Schwartz takes issue with reviewers' tendency to fetishize her portrait subjects as something so incredibly different (excluded from the "us" of her audience) to avoid actually seeing them.<sup>26</sup> To the contrary, Marcia's work is a constructive project. She lifts up the tablecloth on the proverbial Mechanical Turk, the sham "robot" of the nineteenth century that relied on a crumpled human operator to sustain a mirage of a machine automaton for enchanted audiences. More than a century later, a similar illusion propels misplaced optimism in technology, which could not exist without the masses of underpaid and overworked laborers who sacrifice their safety for others' comfort: the Amazon warehouse employee, the Grubhub delivery person. Many of Marcia's portraits comprise a stark rejection of *mise-en-scène*—no background, only the subject against a depthless taupe support—so that there is nothing to look at except for the maskless faces whose labor greases a frictionless economy at the expense of their own ever-increasing peril. Marcia's works forces this encounter. Where, exactly, does "a person" become "a people"? What is the fulcrum between an individual and a multitude? We are impelled to imagine—even to construct—a society that might center the subjectivity of its commons.

- 1 This quote is incorrectly attributed to Yevgeny Yevtushenko, but documentation of the phrase precedes the Russian poet's career. Like so many aphorisms, it's a likely product of spontaneous generation.
- 2 As Eva Grinstein has observed: "[Schvartz will] allow herself the darkest fantasies in the hypothetical task of representing the real." Eva Grinstein, "Marcia Schvartz," *Art Nexus* 7, no. 17 (Fall 2008): 122, emphasis original.
- 3 "Marcia Schvartz CV," available for download on the artist's website, <https://www.marciaschvartz.com/biografia>.
- 4 These authors include María Laura Carrascal, Roberto Amigo, Eduardo Stupía, Gabriel Levinas, Raúl Santana, and many more. A full bibliography is available on the artist's website, <https://www.marciaschvartz.com/bibliografia>.
- 5 Nicolás Guagnini in conversation with the author, May 2021.
- 6 Lucas Villamil, "Marcia Schvartz: 'Hay toda una maraña de pelotudeces que hay que traspasar y que te impide ser vos mismo,'" *Almagro Revista*, accessed April 7, 2021, <https://www.almagrovevista.com.ar/marcia-schvartz-toda-una-marana-pelotudeces-traspasar-te-impide-vos>.
- 7 Valeria Manzano, "El psicobolche: juventud, cultura y política en la Argentina de la década 1980," *Izquierdas* 41 (August 2018): 250–75, <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-50492018000400250>.
- 8 Villamil, "Marcia Schvartz."
- 9 Marcia Schvartz in conversation with the author, May 2021.
- 10 Raúl Santana and Alberto Petrino, "Marcia Schvartz: Pintura – Dibujos – Cerámicas," *Página/12*, January 18, 1998, [https://issuu.com/obragrafica12/docs/marcia\\_schvartz\\_-\\_ccr\\_98](https://issuu.com/obragrafica12/docs/marcia_schvartz_-_ccr_98).
- 11 Nicolás Guagnini in conversation with the author, May 2021.
- 12 Thanks to Peter Raccuglia for pointing out the painting's theological inflections.
- 13 Pamela Colombo, Carlos Masotta, and Carlos Salamanca, "Ecology, Rubble, and Disappearance. Reflections on the Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve in Buenos Aires," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (October 2020): 507–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569325.2021.1884056>.
- 14 John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 78.
- 15 Fernando Bruno, "Batato, de Marcia Schvartz," in *Arte latinoamericano siglo XX: Colección Malba* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Malba, 2018); Santana and Petrino, "Marcia Schvartz."
- 16 Barea used male pronouns during his lifetime. This may be for lack of choice in an era even more hostile to non-binary and gender-fluid expression. Like so many of his contemporaries, Barea died of AIDS-related illness in 1991, two years after Schvartz painted his portrait. He was 30 years old.
- 17 María Laura Carrascal, "La naturaleza de Marcia Schvartz," *La trama de la comunicación* 12 (2007–2008): 115–28.
- 18 Yve-Alain Bois describes the depthless, pneumatic circulation within Matisse's canvasses in his renowned essay, "On Matisse: The Blinding," October 68 (Spring 1994): 60–121.
- 19 Marcia Schvartz in conversation with the author, June 2021.
- 20 Mariana Eva Cerviño, "Marcelo Pombo: condições de formação de um artista improvável," *Tempor Social* 29, no. 3 (December 2017): 287, <https://doi.org/10.11606/0103-2070.ts.2017.111319>.
- 21 "Es que son humanos, totalmente. Para mí son como metáforas de mi persona, son como autorretratos . . . Y esas flores increíbles que sacan de entra las espinas . . . y adentro carnosos y blandos, son divinos, yo los adoro." Santana and Petrino, "Marcia Schvartz," translation mine.
- 22 Roberto Amigo addresses the loss of these two compatriots in his essay for the exhibition Marcia Schvartz: Ojo. See Robert Amigo Cerisola, "El filo del hacha," in *Marcia Schvartz: Ojo* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat, 2016), 8–21.
- 23 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 114.
- 24 Army officials later confessed to leading "death flights" in which drugged and naked political prisoners were thrown from planes to drown in bodies of water, sometimes washing ashore along the river. The search for the disappeared remains ongoing. See Lorenzo Tondo and Uki Goñi, *Guardian*, May 28, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/may/28/argentina-sends-dna-test-kits-embassies-find-juntas-disappeared-victims>.
- 25 Celina Catruc, "El infierno según Marcia Schvartz: un anticipo del horror de la pandemia," *La Nación*, November 29, 2020, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/cultura/el-infierno-segun-marcia-schvartz-anticipo-del-nid2522712/>.
- 26 María Laura Carrascal, *Marcia Schvartz: Pasionaria* (Buenos Aires: Fundación OSDE, 2011), 4.

Marcia Schvartz has exhibited extensively through South America and Spain and was most recently featured in the traveling exhibition “Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985” at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Pinacoteca de Sao Paulo; and the Brooklyn, Museum, 2017-2018. She has received awards and accolades such as the Gran Premio de Honor from the Banco Central de la República Argentina, Buenos Aires, 2015; the Primer Premio at the Salón Hugo del Carril, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, 1996; and the Primer Premio in the 37th Salón Municipal de Artes Plásticas Manuel Belgrano, 1992. Her work is included in public collections throughout the world, including the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and the Bronx Museum of Arts, among others.



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