Tarsila do Amaral, *Abaporu* (The Man Who Eats), 1928, oil on canvas, 33½ × 28½".

painting *Abaporu* (The Man Who Eats), 1928, on loan from the Latin American Art Museum of Buenos Aires for this exhibition, has come to symbolize the evolution of a new Brazilian aesthetic. Rendered in a bold palette, it depicts a gigantic human figure with a tiny head and disproportionately large limbs sitting by a cactus under the sun. The same year, a reproduction of the image was published alongside the "*Manifesto Antropófago*" (Cannibalist Manifesto) written by Oswald de Andrade, Tarsila's then husband. This text proposed that a truly Brazilian aesthetic could be forged via the cannibalization of current foreign cultural practices—by first appropriating and absorbing them, and then "digesting" them through the local context.

Comprised of ninety-two paintings and drawings, grouped thematically, the exhibition offered an insightful voyage through the artist's commitment to making art that could bear witness to the plurality of the people, landscapes, cityscapes, colors, and social customs of her native country. Her subject matter and the "primitive" and "popular" style she adopted took up early modernist precepts while speaking to both the artist's interest in the vernacular and the influence of Surrealism. The retrospective attracted wide audiences eager to see paintings previously only experienced as reproductions; exhibited together, the works revealed unexpected connections. For instance, it became clear that *Antropofagia* (Anthropophagy), 1929, appropriates both *Abaporu*'s sitting figure and the Afro-Brazilian woman with an exposed breast from *A Negra* (The Negress), 1923. And a drawing made earlier in the same year as the latter piece, *A primeira negra* (The First Negress), pointed to its origin of in a more classical rendering of the same subject.

Other works, also made in 1923 (a year Tarsila spent largely in Paris), revealed the range of her figurative stylization. *Figura em Azul* (Figure in Blue) can be seen as an example of traditional self-portraiture, while the broad, angular areas of color and perspective in *Retrato de Oswald de Andrade* (Portrait of Oswald de Andrade), demonstrate the impact of witnessing the rise of Cubism firsthand had on the artist. In *O Modelo* (The Model), the use of geometry to synthesize subject matter suggests the influence of Fernand Léger, one of Tarsila's teachers in Paris. Her prolific experimentation continued over the course of the decade, culminating in the celebrated works of the artist's so-called anthropophagic period.

With the 1929 financial crash, Tarsila's family lost the fortune they had made from their coffee plantation; in the years that followed, the artist turned to more socially oriented themes, as is evident in one of her most reproduced images, *Operários* (Workers), 1933. The turning point was here evoked in the only piece she painted in 1930, *Composição (Figura Só)* (Composition [Lonely Figure]), which is unique in the artist's oeuvre in the fragility it conveys. A solitary, tear-shaped figure stands facing a vast and empty nightscape, with her back to the viewer and her long hair billowing across the canvas. The painting is often understood as emblematic of the artist's personal and financial crisis at the time, but in hindsight, it also could just as poignantly be read as a reckoning with her isolation as a leading female artist cannibalizing modernism in the twentieth century.

—Camila Belchior

BUENOS AIRES

"Tácticas luminosas"

COLECCIÓN DE ARTE AMALIA LACROZE DE FORTABAT

Pink is "the faggot color *par excellence*." So Jorge Gumier Maier declared in the catalogue text for the 1997 group exhibition "*El tao del arte*" (The Tao of Art) at the Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires. It was the last one he curated while serving as the director of the Centro Cultural Rector Ricardo Rojas at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, where, less than a decade earlier, he had founded the dimly lit, hallway-like space as a gallery; the small yet transformative gesture would effect radical change in Argentinean art. Whereas previous art-historical shifts had been tied to explicit social, political, and intellectual engagement, especially in the 1960s, or to neo-expressionism in the 1980s, the El Rojas artists, as they came to be known, were invested in beauty and frivolity by way of craft techniques, vernacular materials, decorative aesthetics, and kitsch, prompting the artist and art historian Jorge López Anaya to characterize their varied output as "light."

This lightness was their politics. Even if it was not readily apparent to those who interpreted their work as superficial, the El Rojas artists were destabilizing traditionally held artistic ideals while queering gender stereotypes. Many of the figures involved were indeed queer and involved in the newly public LGBT scene, and Gumier Maier, who had been a gay activist in the '80s, championed queer aesthetics. This has so far been the dominant lens through which El Rojas has been read, but that focus neglects what is arguably the basis of the group's aesthetic in the "feminine." And here lay the significance of "*Tácticas luminosas*" (Luminous Tactics), organized by Francisco Lemus at the Colección de Arte Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat: the first exhibition dedicated to the women who exhibited in and around El Rojas.

Fernanda Laguna, *Vivir en la luz* (To Live in the Light), 1994, painted wood, collage, light fixture, 9 × 10⅞ × 13¾". From "*Tácticas luminosas*" (Luminous Tactics).

The "luminous tactics" of the title reflected a positive reappropriation of the "lightness" the artists were accused of (much like the adoption of the word *faggot* by the gay community), as well as a reference to the specific meaning the word *light* held, especially for women, in 1990s Argentina, when it had connotations of diet culture and body consciousness. Its attendant vanity symbolically manifested the neoliberal agenda of the country's president, Carlos Menem, as the curator and critic Inés Katzenstein has noted. In addition to their subversive use of the pink—the girlish color of ribbons, roses, candies, and daydreams—the female artists of El Rojas deployed materials and motifs that embraced stereotypically feminine attributes, such as intimacy, cuteness, and tenderness. For instance, the whimsical poems, 1998–2019, and guileless collages, all from 1999, of Fernanda Laguna celebrate the creative space of a young girl's bedroom or journal. And in *Acomodo mi corazón* (I Put My Heart Back Together), 1995, Ana López offers a three-dimensional cartoon heart rendered real by her placement of arteries on top of the emblematic shape.

Another tactic of these artists was to draw upon the domestic sphere; this strategy was particularly loaded given how recently the personal could finally be public (and political) after the end of the dictatorship, in 1983. Alicia Herrero, for example, puts a feminine twist on Minimalism with *Repasando* (Wiping Clean), 1992, in which three equidistantly hung bathroom towels serve as a riposte to masculine, Western art by way of the most private of private spaces. In another work by Laguna, *Vivir en la luz* (To Live in the Light), 1994, light shines through the windows and door of a quaint little sculpture of a house, its roof painted with sparkles and glitter stars.

Adriana Pastorini's group of furniture sculptures (*Pez espada* [Swordfish], 1992; *Sin título* [Untitled], 1992; *Jirafa* (Giraffe), 1993; and four *Sin título* [Untitled] pieces, two from 1992 and one from each of the following years) are each covered in a different fuzzy, funky fabric, which were listed as "*peluche*" (plush), on the wall label. The word also means "stuffed animal," the primary material in Cristina Schiavi's *La Torta* (The Cake), 1993, a tea tray with blue and pink toy bunnies arranged in tiers. In its original installation, titled *Te invito* (I Invite You), 1993, the cake was set on a blue tablecloth among balloons and ringlet streamers in a sparsely furnished room, conjuring the sense of a depressing birthday party. Schiavi imagined the party as one for those who could not attend, or rather, those who could never attend again—for *los desaparecidos* (those who were forcibly and strategically "disappeared" during Argentina's US-backed *Guerra Sucia* [Dirty War]), whom the *peluches* represent. It is a work perhaps most indicative of the spirit of El Rojas, smuggling critical politics, without ever announcing the fact, into its meaning through sweet innocence. As Gumier Maier exclaimed, "How easily people are kept happy!"

—*Kerry Doran*

MEXICALI, MEXICO

Fernando Méndez Corona

CENTRO ESTATAL DE LAS ARTES, MEXICALI

Titled "Baja Soul," this exhibition collected thirty-two paintings, one sculpture, and two videos in Fernando Méndez Corona's largest survey to date. Born in Mexicali, capital of the Mexican state of Baja California, in 1977, Corona studied art in Seattle. Since his return in 1998, he has become a kind of godfather of contemporary muralism in the city, as well as a leading figure within the Baja California group of artists who live and work in the border cities Tijuana and Mexicali. The group includes Mely Barragán, Pablo Castañeda, Charles Glaubitz, Jaime Ruiz Otis, and Daniel Ruanova. Frequently exhibited together, these artists move in and out of each other's work through both influence and collaboration. A recent exhibition at the Escuela Libre de Arquitectura in Tijuana, curated by Thomas Vann Altheimer, dubbed them Artists from the Future, because borders have always been the frontier, suggestive of what is still to come, and these particular artists move with enviable fluidity between cultures, languages, and genres.

Fernando Corona, *M* 2018, oil 80 × 80"

Like many of his contemporaries, Corona works across media. A graffiti artist in his youth, he moved easily from the studio back to outdoor work in the late 2000s, producing dozens of bold, arresting murals for government buildings, migrant shelters, small businesses, and nonprofits. His iconic depictions of women's faces with dark, soulful eyes and mouths protected from the field dust by bandannas were installed on walls and fencing across the city. Softening his style in the early 2010s, Corona painted numerous commissions for high-end restaurants, vineyards, and luxury resorts in the hills of Valle de Guadelupe, the burgeoning new tourist destination in north-central Baja. A serious car accident in 2016 sent him back to the studio. Since then, Corona has concentrated almost exclusively on painting, producing a vast body of beautiful, challenging work that draws variously from street art, the pleasurably flattened realism of Alex Katz and Brian Routh, graphic novels, muralism, and psychological figuration. As he told the photographer Stefan Falke, "I don't believe much in style. . . . Each work can be as different in media or in subject as it can be. I love to find the peculiar in the globalized world we live in and try to give it notice with the artwork."

Spanning fifteen years, the works in "Baja Soul" charted the trajectory of the Baja California region, as well as Corona's painterly inclinations. Border and street culture; Corona's own post-punk youth; and the new stylish, educated hipsters who are both the devisers and consumers of Baja-style architecture, food, decor, and fashion were all represented. Corona's subject matter conjures this dynamic and contrasting milieu. For example, *Sahuaro* (Saguaro), 2019, is a trippy depiction of the enormous cactus, native to the region, against a boldly abstract sky with tiny stars that weep pink droplets. A bat spreads its wings, flying toward a tagged banner. Two swaths of