

RIMER CARDILLO

Impressions (and other images of memory)

by Dr. Karl Emil Willers

Rimer Cardillo began his artistic career in Uruguay as a printmaker, honing his skills in a field that thrives on media specialization and technical achievement — often at the expense of conceptual rigor. In today's art world, we take it for granted that fine artists frequently turn to master printers to collaborate on print portfolios; it is not unusual for such deluxe editions to be published by sophisticated print workshops that place teams of experts and technicians at an artist's disposal. It is rare though to encounter an individual working within this most specialized of artistic practices whose endeavors are both theoretically ambitious and technically innovative. Cardillo's artistic practice skillfully negotiates a political commitment and methodological facility within image making today. The artist's major print series measure out the career and contributions of this prolific artist, and these portfolios convey a graphic facility and subtle variation that enables creative exploration and determined advocacy.

Early Explorations

Uruguay and Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s

During the 1960s, Cardillo studied art at a politically liberal (if not radical) institution of higher learning in his native Uruguay. He is a great advocate of the training he received at the National School of Fine Arts, Uruguay's most prestigious institution for studies in the visual arts. Though the printmaking facilities and equipment were modest, the artist is generous in his praise of his professors and their teaching:

"I was at the university from 1961 to 1968 — seven years was a normal course of study because we were required to have knowledge of all the different artistic media and technical procedures. My idea was to become a painter, but I still remember first visiting the print workshop, and for me printmaking became a means of discovery. The teachers I had were trained in the great European tradition of printmaking, they shared techniques and skills that they had learned from master printmakers. In the early decades of the twentieth century, a wave of European immigration brought highly skilled craftsmen — extremely knowledgeable printers — to Uruguay. This was a generation that had gained their expertise in long-established print workshops in Italy, Germany, and other European countries. They brought to Montevideo a vital and active tradition of printmaking." 1

Exhibited at the end of his graduate studies in Montevideo, the **Ovalos (Ovals)** series of 1966-67 (see catalogue Plate I, title page) is a remarkably mature and professional body of work for a young man just out of art school. Amazingly accomplished woodcuts, the *Ovals* exhibit a sophisticated sense of hip

design and hot color — they are, after all, very much products of late 1960s youth culture. Cardillo's woodcuts do not look dated. With the counter-culture retro-design of the 1960s currently very much in vogue, these graphic works appear remarkably current. Exhibiting exuberant style and fashion, the abstracted seed-like forms presage Cardillo's lifelong interest in botanical variety and abundant fertility:

"I was working with organic ideas. I wanted to escape from the square format of traditional painting and printing, so I cut the woodblocks into oval shapes. I used plywood blocks of cedar and also imbuaya, a wood from Brazil that is a very hard and will print the finest details. The forms are reminiscent of seeds and fruits — some people found them very vaginal — but basically abstract. "

Brash and rebellious in their experimentation with color and shape, these early prints are indicative of more than just formal revolutions in art and design. Early in his career, Cardillo learned that, for him, radical aesthetics worked in tandem with progressive politics and communal activism.

"In 1968, I graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Montevideo. While I was a student, there were still official Salon des Beaux Arts exhibitions, with awards and prizes, mounted annually by the Ministry of Culture. In 1968, there was tremendous turmoil within the art community of Montevideo — we no longer believed in the government, its powers and institutions. The artists went on strike and refused to exhibit their work at the Salons anymore. Also in 1968, I was contacted by the Printmaking Club in Montevideo and became an active member. This was a large community of artists interested in expressing themselves through printmaking. They invited me to give a course and I continued to teach it for several years. The organization had over 2,700 subscribers, and they all received an original print each month. The Club's aim was to take art out of a commercial gallery system and get it directly to people, everyone could have an artist's print in their home. It was a phenomenon of the 1960s and 1970s, this newly emergent interest in printing, but it did not survive."

In 1969, Cardillo won a scholarship to study at East Berlin's Weissenhof School of Art and Architecture, and late that year the young artist sailed for a Europe. The journey was an adventure, for he traveled on an East German merchant ship and was at sea for eight weeks. Cardillo remembers being impressed that the boat had professional women sailors on board, the Democratic Republic of Germany being rather more progressive in its sexual politics. The young Cardillo was able to explore museums and galleries in European ports where the ship anchored before arriving at its final destination, and Cardillo reveled in studying original works of western art that he had previously experienced only through reproduction.

During his two years in Germany, Cardillo was always aware of the new political activism motivating such artists as Anselm Kiefer, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, and especially Joseph Beuys. This was the first post-World War II generation of artists working in a German nation divided and scarred by the horrors of war and crimes of the Holocaust. The contributions of these artists would speak ever more powerfully to Cardillo as his own art came to address the political and social deterioration of South

American nations during the 1970s. At the time, knowledge of these advanced practices in new German art also made Cardillo conscious of the limitations of academic studies in the Eastern Bloc:

"I was working in Berlin with students of Kandinsky and of the Bauhaus. Most were repressed and couldn't express themselves or do what they wanted. There was an official aesthetic. East Germany was tied to Soviet conceptions of art, so the emphasis in printing was in technique and medium. There was a delegation from Poland that arrived to see the school and they were far beyond the East Germans in the conceptual realm, so the dean of the school showed them my work — they saw me as an ambassador from the West."

Cardillo's studies in East Germany were formative for both his artistic and intellectual life. Historical connections to both the printing industry and paper manufacture were a very tangible part of the German milieu, and made a lasting impression on the young printmaker. Following his year in East Berlin, Cardillo was invited to further his printmaking studies at Leipzig in East Germany.

"At the Leipzig School for Printmaking and Art of the Book, I studied with master printers born at the turn of the century who had worked with the German Expressionists. These were amazingly skilled printmakers with knowledge about materials and a connection to processes that had been passed down from generation to generation for centuries. The German print workshop was a beautiful environment, very 19th century. It was wonderful to work in those studios with the master printers and hear the stories that they told."

While exposed to extraordinary expertise in printmaking, Cardillo was also studying examples of European (and particularly German) art history. Cardillo speaks about being allowed to peruse the woodcuts and engravings of Dürer in the print study rooms of East German museums, libraries and collections. Over a decade later, Cardillo would produce one of his most accomplished prints, a meticulously engraved image of a beetle, and give the work the title Dürer in Sacsayhuaman as an homage to the great Northern Renaissance painter and printmaker.

While studying in Leipzig, Cardillo completed a series of prints that demonstrate his greater mastery of traditional intaglio methods, including etching, engraving, aquatint, and drypoint. Conceptualized during his year in East Berlin, the abstracted imagery of the ***Objetos flotantes y volantes (Floating and Flying Objects)*** series (see catalogue Plate II, page ii) juxtaposes biomorphic and rectilinear forms, alluding to the contrasts between his Uruguayan homeland and the European environments he encountered.

"Organic and natural forms are juxtaposed with more mechanical and architectural objects. This was my first contact with Europe and the world of technology. In Uruguay, life was more connected to nature. The imagery expressed my feelings during this period. Every day it snowed during the German winter, and it was the first time I had seen snow in my life. The Floating and Flying Objects involved working on one copper plate and printing in black ink on white paper; I was in love with the intaglio processes and the intaglio inks. I was reading a lot of Latin American literature, Jorge Luis Borges

of Argentina and Gabriel García Márquez of Colombia and Mario Vargas Llosa of Peru — the '60s and the '70s was the great period of Hispanic literature. There are narrative connotations in the prints: imagery of animals and birds and organisms. The compositions and images were built up from collages. I found paper that was used in the studio for blotting purposes and I took that paper and made collages. This was the first time I did etching, engraving, and aquatint in a very concentrated way, when I was working with the master printers in Berlin. Back in Uruguay, I also did a woodcut version of the print Un Traga-aldaba for an exhibition poster; the title is difficult to translate since it is a made-up word, but suggests people that are greedy or selfish.”

In Leipzig, Cardillo also began the ***Objeto deslizándose (Moving Object)*** series of lithographs (see catalogue Plate III, page iv). Incorporating the title *Luciérnaga fantástica (Fantastic Lightning Bug)*, these largely abstract designs announce the artist's first venture into explorations of insect life — a subject to occupy his aesthetic for many years.

“The University of Leipzig is one of the oldest in the world — filled with students of literature and philosophy. Leipzig was a city that had not changed since the Second World War. In places, they still had gaslights in the streets. These lights gave me the initial image, and then I connected it with organic forms and memories of the countryside in Uruguay. The prints were in my second one-person show in 1972 in Uruguay, after I had returned home from Germany.”

The *Moving Object* lithographs, like the *Floating and Flying Objects* prints, attempt a rapport between diverse cultural traditions, seeking visual forms that translate difference and that bridge division. For Cardillo, the printing process itself is always a conceptual resource, providing a visual syntax that reverberates with meanings. The principle that oil and water repel each other is the basis for all lithography. When you draw with a greasy substance upon a lithographic stone and then wet its surface with water, an oil-based ink will stick to the greasy marks and allow a “positive” image to be printed. Alternatively, a “negative” version of the same drawing can be achieved by etching the lithographic stone as if it were a metal plate. The process involves covering the stone with shellac, a substance that, except in the areas where it has been drawn upon, will harden and protect the stone's surface from an acid solution. Because the original oily drawing is eaten away, this procedure is usually reserved for the final stage of producing an edition of lithographs. This reverse printing is used to great advantage in the last image of the *Moving Object* series, which offers a darker nocturnal version of the abstract forms developed in the prints.

A Voice of Protest

Uruguay in the 1970s

The rise of military rule in the early 1970s led to a tragic transformation of Uruguayan social, political, and cultural life. After the artist returned to Montevideo in 1971, Cardillo's work began to

metaphorically reflect and comment on the threats of imprisonment, torture, and violence that became part of existence in Uruguay. As the military junta consolidated its power, the National School of Fine Arts in Montevideo — a hotbed of resistance to the rise of conservative forces — was closed down and literally dismantled. Anything at the institution that could be carted away was loaded onto trucks and hauled away; for the printmakers this included the loss of their presses. To this day, Cardillo reports, the studio equipment for teaching printmaking has never been recovered — the presses probably buried at some remote location never disclosed.

With the school and its resources shut down, Cardillo opened his own home and studio to friends and students. "The military took power on June 27, 1973," Cardillo recalls the date as if it were yesterday, he has no need to look it up:

"The School of Fine Arts closed. The only places that one could learn art were the private studios. Mine was dedicated to printmaking and works on paper in other media; other workshops around Montevideo were devoted to painting or sculpture or very specific purposes. My workshop became not only a place to learn, but also a place to be together with other people. It was also a healing environment; there were people who had recently been let out of jail and, following medical advice, began to pursue art. They never thought they could ever do anything again — those were difficult moments. The studio was open two days a week from 3 in the afternoon until as late as 3 in the morning. Everything was watched and controlled. There was a retired military man across the street, a very cultivated man who always wanted to talk about art. I am sure he told the authorities to leave us alone, and his support protected us. The studio operated from 1974 until 1979, the year I came to the United States."

Cardillo describes a world turned upside down and inside out by a military force determined to secure its grasp on power. Suddenly, with no debate and no recourse, everything was censored. The police actually detained the artist and several of his colleagues, arresting them for publishing a calendar that illustrated popular ballads that the government suspected of subversion:

"The Printmaking Club of Montevideo created a calendar for 1973 and asked me to contribute a print to the project. There was an art fair that year in Montevideo, and the association had a booth where they sold the calendar. They chose to illustrate popular songs, some had controversial political subtexts and, for that, we were picked up for questioning. They knew everybody's address and found us. They took us to jail where we were interrogated. We were all sleeping in one room in a building that was infamous for being a center for detention and torture — called the Tintoreria Biere, or dry cleaners."

Cardillo still recalls this episode as an utterly surreal occurrence and otherworldly episode in his life. The artist downplays the incident because he and his associates were released after a couple of days, but such tales are chilling — especially since others who found themselves in similar situations were not as fortunate. Many citizens of Montevideo were caught up in cycles of arbitrary arrest and periods of indeterminate incarceration. A significant number of Uruguayans merely suspected of "dissident"

activities or “questionable” associations by the new military regime were never seen again, and many more were condemned to years of imprisonment, often suffering inhumane conditions and even brutal torture. The repressions and intimidations were relentless, turning what had been a long-term liberal democracy into a repressive military dictatorship that lasted for almost a decade. 2

Begun as the events of 1973 were unfolding in Uruguay, Cardillo’s photo-silkscreen series ***Chicharras y Mariposas Nocturnas (Cicadas and Moths)*** emerges as an important and enduring visual statement of protest (see catalogue Plate IV, page 1). Deploying the look of crude newspaper photo-documentary, and making skilled use of limited color — mostly golden-tans, bloody-reds, and blue-blacks — Cardillo strategically creates a vocabulary of visual form that registers dissent and opposition. Using only a few screens masked and rearranged to vary the compositions, Cardillo’s magnified images of insect life read as a forceful indictment of dictatorial rule in his native country. Many of the titles in the series — *El Conciliábulo (The Secret Meeting)*, *El Elejido (The Chosen One)*, and *El Escarmiento (The Punishment)* — are highly inflected terms that suggest the fuller allusions and broader meanings of the prints. The underlying political critique is at once general and specific: it cautions against unchecked militarism and unfettered adulation in all cultures, but also speaks directly to the events within Uruguayan society of the early 1970s. Cardillo’s manipulation of insect imagery sustains a biting commentary on political realities that can only be described as Orwellian — the graphics being analogous to *Animal Farm* in their anthropomorphism, but also registering a clinical mise-en-scène and brutal sensibility more characteristic of 1984. Though the series has rarely been shown publicly in its entirety, the portfolio constitutes one of the era’s most significant statements of protest — remarkable for its formal sophistication and uncompromising in its political content. The work remains a model of activism in the visual arts, possessing a graphic intensity comparable to John Heartfield’s photo collages of the 1930s that record the rise of the Nazi and Fascist regimes in Europe. Though the militancy of this series is strategically veiled and tactically encrypted to avoid outright censorship, Cardillo succeeds in using *Cicadas and Moths* to denounce and condemn the rise of totalitarian extremists.

Continuing to explore the expressive power of magnified insect life, Cardillo began work on three plates that would be used to print the ***Insecto (Insect)*** series of 1973-74 (see catalogue Plate V, page 4).

“I was able to view the insect through an electron microscope, and there was no end to going deeper and deeper into the detail. Each plate took a month and a half to complete, but that was not a problem since it was a time when one was terrorized by what was going on in the streets, and so one spent days in the studio. It was almost a medieval time. I would just wake up and start to work. If I got hungry, I would eat some bread and salami and then go back to work. I had a radio and could listen to that, but I did not have a phone (one had to wait seven or eight years to get a phone line) and so friends would just stop by. The rest was work, that was what kept us alive. The connection with our work was the only thing we had. We didn’t have any materials — no inks, no papers — and I had to ask friends to bring things back when they traveled.”

Progress on the Insect project can be followed from the meticulous detailing of the original pencil drawings to the sculptural relief of the zinc plates that are themselves very much works of art. Two sets

of prints were produced, one of only embossing with no color other than the white of the paper, and another colored version. Working in his Montevideo studio, Cardillo developed a new process to achieve the lustrous metallic finish of the colored prints:

“For the color versions, the paper was hand painted after it had been embossed. Then, two or three layers of acrylic gesso thinned with alcohol were applied. The coated paper was then rubbed over with inks — applied in an aerosol thickness right onto the paper — and then wiped as if it were a plate.”

For Cardillo, such carefully worked surfaces emulated the Christian icons he first encountered during excursions into Bulgaria and Romania while studying in Eastern Europe during the early 1970s. The artist had grown to admire the muted color and appreciate the layered patina of these relatively small, but powerfully evocative images. Cardillo’s encounters with these and other objects of veneration increasingly encouraged him to explore sacred forms within his own art, but more to evoke their general experiential effects than to further their specific religious contents.

Determined to pursue his artwork, but in need of funds to support his atelier, Cardillo embarked upon one of the most ambitious projects of his career: a series of 16 prints executed between 1978 and 1980 called the ***Sublime Orfebrería (Sublime Jewelry)*** series (see catalogue Plate VI, page 5). Displays of technical virtuosity, these works are unrivalled in their handling of a vast array of printing methods. Most truly great printers are specialists, expertly trained in intaglio or woodcut or lithography or silkscreening or embossing. However, Cardillo’s expertise extends to all these graphic methods and procedures. This makes Cardillo distinctive among image-makers — the fine artist and master printer combined in one individual of exceptional talent.

In what amounts to a subversion of typical printing procedures, Cardillo ran each of the Sublime Jewelry prints through the press only once. Considering the mélange of complex printing techniques involved, this is a remarkable achievement. Most of the compositions have at their center a relatively small insect image printed from a zinc plate that is etched, aquatinted, and engraved and then printed using the viscosity method. Cardillo describes this technique that allows all colors to be printed at the same time:

“Viscosity printing entails using one plate to print many colors — it is like doing a painting on the plate and then passing it only once through the press. I used very small and delicate brushes to ink the plates, so each plate used in the Sublime Jewelry series took three to four hours to paint and prepare for printing. And then, for each print in the edition, the plate has to be repainted. It is a very intimate and intense kind of work.”

Sometimes this zinc plate itself is cut out to follow the outline of a butterfly or to create a non-rectangular form. Almost all prints in the series are embossed and printed with a leaf design. Each botanical specimen was cast in polyester resin to produce a plate, which was then engraved to ensure visibility of the minute veins and delicate edges of each leaf. In some of the prints, photomechanical cliché plates are also incorporated into the design. Cardillo collects these increasingly rare antique plates, leftovers from an era when intricate patterns and detailed borders were standard fare for

newspaper and magazine production. In other cases, machine parts from long-lost industrial processes are recruited as plates for embossing.

Cardillo's enthusiasm for texture is generous as well as contagious. Almost any object — a rubber shower mat or a weathered wooden plank, for instance — will be cast to produce a relief for embossing. Some prints in the *Sublime Jewelry* series exhibit an all over abstract relief that comes from the walls of the artist's Montevideo studio. Cardillo is eager to explain that it takes thirty to fifty years for such walls to age and mature, since microorganisms that live in mortar make the intricate patterns. The extremely complex embossing evident within the *Sublime Jewelry* series is something to admire for it is a unique accomplishment. Embossing is usually the final step in print production, since running a print through a press once again is likely to either flatten the raised design or weaken and tear the paper. Cardillo was able to surmount this technical barrier by meticulously cutting and stacking felts around each plate, thus allowing several different plates to be printed simultaneously. Layers of felt are commonly used in printing to incrementally adjust the pressure exerted on a sheet of paper as it passes through a press. The cutting and stacking of felts to strike a series of inked embossing plates simultaneously is a new technique developed by Cardillo through trial and error. The artist relates that many printers are still shocked at the idea of cutting into their felts, but for Cardillo the specialized tools, materials, and processes of printmaking are the raw materials for invention.

As early as 1974 and in tandem with the *Sublime Jewelry* series, Cardillo began producing smaller embossed prints of brilliantly colored insects and leaves, often little more than one or two inches across in size. Cardillo exploits an extraordinarily luminous — almost phosphorescent — color within these delicate prints that were first embossed with their designs and then each hand painted using watercolors. The cast leaves are painstakingly identified in the title of each of the small prints; more often than not, the works bear the plants' common and familiar names rather than their scientific designations. They represent a wide cross-section of botanical species native to Uruguay or adjoining South American countries — places familiar to Cardillo in his youth. They are often fleshy tropical specimens that yield a high relief when their cast forms are imprinted into the paper. They encapsulate the exceedingly rich diversity of Uruguay's plant life, and for Cardillo their allusions and associations can be very personal (as, for example, when he mentions that a particular leaf came from a plant grown in his mother's garden).

In the later 1970s and early 1980s, many of these small leaf and insect prints were mounted together within carefully crafted wooden display cases. Several small cases are placed together within larger cases, creating a puzzle of boxes within boxes. Each layer or level reveals new graphic treasures as they are removed and rearranged. These ***Objetos Gráfico-Ecológicos (Graphic-Ecological Objects)*** of 1974-1981 (see catalogue Plate VIII, page 8) must be picked up and brought close to the eye, the prints inspected for their meticulous detailing and admired for their elegant execution. This is a connoisseur's art par excellence, intended for intimate viewing by an individual or small gathering interested not only in the art of printmaking, but also in the sciences of entomology and botany. Cardillo later came to recognize that these boxed sets gave palpable form to an enforced solitude and inescapable seclusion that he and many other Uruguayans were experiencing in this period of severe repression. When considering works of such complex and layered meaning, it is often limiting to be too literal in

interpretation, but these elegant prints in simple boxes convey a poetic sense of the survival of artistic and creative endeavor in the face of violent and aggressive force. The upright and compartmentalized forms of the *Graphic-Ecological Objects* was largely inspired by Cardillo's encounter with the towering, elongated proportions used in German Gothic building. The spare and austere interior spaces of the so-called Brick Gothic cathedrals that Cardillo toured in northern Germany during the early 1970s made a lasting impression on the artist.

Titling some of these works "reliquaries" not only draws attention to underlying sacred allusions, but also points to the careful preservation — behind glass and in encasements — of a natural world that is in danger. To emphasize contemporary threats to biodiversity and the demise of plant and animal species, some of the prints are given the poignant but prophetic title "*A la búsqueda de la naturaleza aún no perdida*" ("*In Search of Nature Not Yet Lost*"). As with all of Cardillo's mature work, the references are layered and oblique — and thus here a borrowing from Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (*Remembrance of Things Past*) melds ecological concerns with ecclesiastical forms. Reliquaries preserve sacred objects, such as the remains of a holy saint, underscoring the reverence in which the natural world must be held if it is to be preserved rather than memorialized. Environmental issues (and how they are affected by real politics and economic factors) are a principle focus of Cardillo's works since the late 1970s. Throughout the 1980s, Cardillo's art directly confronts the loss of animal species (such as the *ñandu* and *mulita*, the South American ostrich and armadillo, whose populations are dwindling) and the destruction of plant life (such as the eradication of the araucaria tree that once dominated the Atlantic Forest of South America). Such pressing ecological concerns — latent in Cardillo's work since the 1960s — increasingly guide the artist's creative endeavors and become a central theme in his work over the coming decades.

Strategies of Metaphor

The United States in the 1980s and 1990s

In 1979, Cardillo accepted a residency with the art department at the University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale. In re-establishing his life and career in the United States, Cardillo was one of more than a quarter of a million Uruguayans — many the cultural elite and intellectual leaders of the nation — who left their country to escape a repressive military reign that stretched into the mid 1980s.

"The general situation in the country was very bad. Eventually the atmosphere became unbearable. The invitation to work at Southern Illinois University provided an opening for me to come to the United States. It was very difficult for artists and intellectuals to get permission to travel outside of Uruguay — and because I had exhibited my work in Cuba, my passport privileges were limited. To travel to the United States, I had to be invited by an institution — and I ended up staying in this country."

Carbondale is a little more than an hour's drive southeast of St. Louis, Missouri, near the southern tip of Illinois. A professor of printmaking invited Cardillo to visit a lithography studio in New Harmony, a small

town to the east, just across the state line in Indiana. While visiting the workshop, Cardillo was asked to work with the master lithographers to produce a print, and the remarkable ***Wasp from New Harmony*** of 1980 (see catalogue ill., page 41), an image dominated by the enlarged image of a wasp native to North America, commemorates this professional collaboration. Though specifying the place where the print was executed, the work's title also announced the beginnings of Cardillo's artistic work in the United States. Several proofs of the lithograph exist and reveal Cardillo's progress toward a final image. An initial trial proof (or impression made to review progress on a print) shows the wasp printed in black ink using one lithographic stone. A working proof (or sheet onto which the artist has added work by hand) proposes the addition of a reddish background, with details of a smaller insect design sketched out in white. The final impression includes a more precisely rendered insect drawing, photocopied from a Italian engraving the artist found in an entomologist's guidebook probably dating to the 17th century. Meticulously etched into a second stone, the image was printed in umber to complete the small edition of prints.

While in residence at Carbondale, Cardillo studied and reinterpreted imagery of late 16th and early 17th century Spanish Baroque art and architecture in a series of complex photo-etchings with engraving, aquatint, and mezzotint added. The photographic details used to produce the ***Baroque Suite*** of 1980-81 (see catalogue Plate XI, page 14) had been shot by Cardillo himself during visits to churches and missions spread throughout Peru and Bolivia. Cardillo was captivated and mesmerized by the elaborate sculptural ornamentation characteristic of an art known for its unflinching portrayal of physical pain, torment, and suffering. In Cardillo's prints, this often-gruesome religious iconography is interspersed with equally nightmarish insect imagery — grasshoppers and beetles impaled with pins and needles, forming a unique variation on the themes of Christian martyrdom and crucifixion. The parallels between the religious and the insect imagery in the prints becomes paramount — there is an abundance of winged figures, some appearing in the guise of beatific angels and others as resplendent butterflies. Cardillo is quick to point out that, possibly more than any other South American country, Uruguay has very secular political traditions, and this liberal acceptance of religious freedom and plurality informs the artist's personal spirituality. However, Cardillo also readily admits to having always been attracted to cathedrals and temples as well as the religious accoutrements — reliquaries and altarpieces — that decorate the interiors of such places of worship.

Upon completing his residency at Southern Illinois University in 1980, Cardillo moved to New York City and established his own print workshop on West 23rd Street in Manhattan. The artist's long-term fascination with the box form and its properties of enclosure and concealment, as well as display and revelation would prompt his first major printmaking endeavors in New York. In a series of unique print-collages, Cardillo delved further into the techniques and tools used to preserve and display insects for scientific study. Executed in the United States in 1982 and 1983, the ***White Box*** and ***Ritual Box*** prints (see catalogue Plate IX, page 9; see catalogue Plate VII, page 6) form a powerful and succinct visual indictment of the physical torture and other brutal crimes taking place in a Uruguay under military rule. Cardillo recounts:

"Things were beginning to loosen a bit in the 1980s. The hardest times were during the early 1970s when the militares first came to power. By 1980s, they were easing their

control over the political parties — allowing a little freedom to assemble and debate. There is a healing process after a period of such repression — a silence. There is a collective understanding that for many people it is too difficult to remember; they just want to try to forget it.”

One way that Cardillo worked through his personal struggles as a working artist and Uruguayan émigré was to immerse himself in a Latin American literature that was attempting to grapple with some of the harsher political realities of the era. He voraciously devoured the writings of many contemporary Uruguayan authors, including the poetry of Mario Benedetti and the prose of Juan Carlos Onetti.

Throughout the 1980s, Cardillo continued to further explore box-like forms and images in his art, mining the subject for its broader historical, social, political, cultural, and psychological meanings. The artist's fascination with boxes and their contents emerged early in life, and still resonates with very personal associations. Cardillo's father began his professional life as a barber, and then returned to operating a barbershop in Montevideo while in semi-retirement. Found within this place of business were boxes of all shapes and sizes, each holding different tools and appurtenances of the trade: boxes of cigars, of straight razors, of scissors, of hand clippers and sundry other items. Cardillo has now inherited these containers, still filled with sharpened instruments for cutting hair and shaving beards. Looking at them, one cannot avoid the more horrific analogies to stashes of arcane devices for torture. Cardillo also recalls that his mother kept photographs, letters, and postcards — the entire history of both sides of the family — preserved in old canisters and other saved containers. Cardillo recalls his childhood curiosity about these caches of seemingly secretive information being stacked up and stored away. According to Cardillo, the kitchen of his family's home was also filled with tin and cardboard containers that held the sweets — biscuits and cookies, bonbons and chocolates — that would be a focus of any child's attention. Storing his accumulations of trinkets and baubles, souvenirs and knick-knacks in boxes was undoubtedly the most natural of compulsions for Cardillo. He had, after all, been raised in a house that had a box for everything (and Cardillo would be the first to read such a statement both literally and figuratively — the box not only organizes and displays, but also mingles and conceals).

During the mid 1980s, Cardillo began assembling collections of disparate objects. Items of a similar type or genus were sometimes grouped together — a collection of smaller boxes, each holding miscellaneous items, or an assortment of real and fake Meso-American artifacts combined with odd knick-knacks. These **Collection Boxes** of 1984-85 (see catalogue Plate XIII, page 18) and the seemingly (but not necessarily) random things they contained, became for Cardillo a way of bringing together and juxtaposing images and forms that held some significance for the artist. There are obvious precedents for Cardillo's *Collection Boxes* in surrealist practices of juxtaposition and assemblage, of making the familiar strange or the ordinary precious. However, Cardillo's assorted objects defiantly lack the aesthetic finish of a Joseph Cornell vignette or the cunning gamesmanship of a Fluxus accumulation. Cardillo's boxes are more unceremoniously assembled and casually arranged so as to almost defy consideration as works of art. This quality brings them close to the found objects of Andre Breton or the ready-mades of Marcel Duchamp, but by comparison Cardillo's maneuverings are far more fussy in their combinations and finicky in their classifications. For many years, Cardillo has maintained a close friendship with a world-famous Uruguayan entomologist. One of Cardillo's prized boxes contains a single

insect with his associate's card attached to the lid: The entomologist's surname is identical to a brand of cigars that also name another of Cardillo's Collection Boxes — a chance wordplay, but nonetheless one that Cardillo appreciates. Cardillo's impulsive clutter evokes a pre-surrealist temperament that has something of an affinity with the encyclopedic compulsions of realism: the categorizing, cataloging, inventorying, and registering recorded in literary works by Honoré de Balzac (*Bouvard e Pecuchet*) or Henry James (*The Spoils of Poynton*) or Isidore Ducasse (*Les Chants de Maldoror*). The resulting accumulations are undeniably personal and adamantly playful, sometimes eccentric and always idiosyncratic — but such strategies guarantee that meanings and purposes remain slightly opaque, references and allusions stay willfully open-ended.

For Cardillo, the box itself possesses a metaphorical plurality and psychological dualism; in some cases an object gathered into a box had already appeared in a print, while in other instances items accumulated within a collection would only infiltrate into the artist's printmaking repertoire with time. Eventually, the *Collection Boxes* and their contents became the central subject matter and primary source materials for Cardillo's art. This is nowhere more evident than in the ***Caribbean Rounds*** monotypes of 1985 (see catalogue Plate X, page 12) in which Cardillo portrays a commercial cigar box containing a tree branch from Uruguay (eaten by worms and insects and covered with lichens and mosses), as well as mica stones found near Cardillo's 23rd Street studio space in New York (hard objects with shiny glints amidst a grimy dullness). Symbolically unifying the duality of Cardillo's native and adopted lands, this idiosyncratic collection of worthless souvenirs no doubt holds very personal value. Skillfully enacting multiple variations on this single theme, Cardillo produces these monotypes — or unique prints — by painting on Plexiglas and then laying a sheet of paper over the still wet surface and passing it through a press.

Repeatedly, these and other works reveal Cardillo's ongoing interest in using printing methods not to make multiple identical impressions, but rather to produce an image that has the look of having been imprinted. Throughout the 1980s, Cardillo increasingly used printmaking less as a tool for reproduction, and more as a set of procedures for creating unique works of art. The image Cardillo wants can only be achieved via transfer, a procedure that has fascinated many post-war avant-garde artists. This look of the copy, the reproduction, the replica, the duplicate, the imitation, the simulacrum, the counterfeit, and the derivative is all-important to Cardillo's work — but not to interject a theoretical and critical apparatus for its own sake. These processes consistently call attention to that which is absent or lost, that which is elsewhere or other — concepts that resonate with the very purpose and significance of Cardillo's imagery.

Throughout the early 1980s, Cardillo continued to explore the box theme in several extended series of prints, culminating in the mid-1980s with the pared-down imagery of the ***Found Totem*** and ***Long Box*** portfolios (see catalogue ill., page 43; see catalogue Plate XII page 15). The *Found Totem* prints of 1985-86 — unique combinations of mezzotint, engraving and woodcut — depict a single branch or stick inserted into a niche-like opening at the center of each composition. Their austere simplicity recalls the unadorned funerary alcoves of ancient Mesolithic temples or early Christian catacombs. The *Long Box* prints of 1986-88 are abstracted and simplified renderings of an elongated box with its lid thrown open to reveal an interior devoid of contents. The stark geometry of the diagram bears more than a passing

resemblance to the reductive linear abstractions found in the 1950s graphic art of Joseph Albers. Like much Bauhaus design, there is a play in Cardillo's *Open Box* prints between two-dimensional flatness and three-dimensional depth. The allusions are abstract and open-ended, but one cannot help but see in this luminous image a cathartic purging and an emptying out of disturbing contents. These nearly non-objective shapes that tend to slip in and out of focus present an image of life and resurrection triumphing over death and entombment. The central image of the *Open Box* series is a colograph print — a process by which cut pieces of cardboard protected with a coating of acrylic gesso are used as a plate. The rest of the sheet is filled with the delicate grain of a plywood block. Each of these prints is rubbed by hand with powdered pigments or graphite, so that no two are the same.

In 1988, Cardillo received a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). The series of large **NYSCA Proposal Drawings** (see catalogue Plate XIV, page 19) sketches out sculptural projects that emulate tripartite altars and ornate reliquaries, several of which were later executed in full-scale installations. The artist's forays beyond printmaking expanded to include constructions that filled entire rooms and interior spaces, and his prolonged interest in box-like containers came to embrace monumental architectural structures reminiscent of sanctuaries, shrines, and sepulchres. These new projects, first diagrammed in the *NYSCA Proposal Drawings*, commemorated the loss of natural environments and native species throughout the Americas. With such titles as *Burning Forest Altar*, Cardillo's art explicitly mourns the destruction of the Amazonian rain forest and the *montes criollos*, or old-growth woodlands of the Americas.

A move toward an abstraction that both conceals and reveals underlying content characterizes much of Cardillo's production of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Rather than continuing with the hard-edged and rectilinear geometries of the box form, the artist's further inroads into nonobjective form begin to take a far more expressive and gestural direction. Cardillo's new abstract mode brashly experiments with materials and processes, reverberating with the same defiant activism that characterizes his large-scale sculptural constructions and site-specific installations. At the time, Cardillo's studio was housed in a dilapidated 19th-century industrial building on West 53rd Street between 10th and 11th Avenues.

The floors of this defunct manufacturing building were constructed from huge wooden planks that, over time, had been worn down and gouged into and then patched with industrial metal plates. For Cardillo, these rough-hewn surfaces held associations with his homeland, something of a distant relative to the crudely constructed wooden corrals and stables found on the cattle ranches in Uruguay and other parts of South America. He comments:

"At the 53rd Street studio, only the first three floors were functional — the rest of the building was abandoned. Some pieces of machinery were left over from an old industrial factory and the tin ceiling was falling down and decaying. Rust was all over the place. The whole floor was like a collage — covered with greasy spots and patched in places with metal sheets. Every time I saw that floor, I started to connect it with metal plates, and litho stones, and wood blocks I had seen before. I found many pieces in that building — the ceramic sink used in Silent Barrack and the wooden planks used in Memorial Diptych. Every time I went to the fourth and fifth floors, I found some pieces."

Two heavy sheets of handmade paper were attached to create the tall and elongated format of the three large **Memorial Diptych** prints of 1989 (see catalogue ill., page 45). These double-sized sheets were subsequently embossed using a large rectangular section of wood flooring from his midtown studio — a massive plank into which the artist had gouged long deep furrows with his woodcutting tools. Each embossing was then hand colored by rubbing the deeply furrowed sheet with graphite, charcoal and pastel — creating white, grey, and black (or light, medium, and dark) versions of the same composition. The section of wood flooring was eventually incorporated into a large-scale sculpture of the same title that suggests both a gaping box-like form with its lid precariously propped open and some primitive pressing mechanism ready to go into action (see catalogue Plate XV, page 22). Following the practice of African sculptors, the raw wood in the sculptural apparatus is sealed and preserved using natural fat obtained from ducks and chickens, giving the work a slightly stained luster.

The **Rupestrian Wall** series of 1990 (see catalogue Plate XVI, page 23) also began as rubbings from the floorboards of Cardillo's midtown New York studio:

"I began to find images in that floor and connected these images with rupestrian signs. I began looking at images from the Tiahuanaco culture of Bolivia, and researching the markings on stone petroglyphs and shapes of rock forms made by prehistoric man. There are iconic images embedded in my works — a warrior with a shield and spear, a paired man and woman, vessel and amphora shapes, fossils produced by plants, definitely stones from the Uruguayan countryside, all this is in these works. It is an imagery going to the essence of form and shape — going to the sign and the symbol."

Encrusted with graphite, oil stick, powdered pigment, sawdust — seemingly every mark-making substance close at hand — these crude designs hover between figuration and abstraction, possessing an affinity with the pictographic forms of Adolph Gottlieb's early abstractions, the emblematic shapes of Roberto Matta's line drawings, and especially the symbolic vocabulary of Joaquín Torres-García's mature work.

"Torres-García was still a powerful presence in Uruguay during the years when I was in school. Many of his works remained on view in Montevideo and his late followers continued to exhibit. There is in Torres-García's work the will for form to span two different civilizations and two different eras. The compositions have connections to Mondrian and de Stijl, but also from the ancient sources — the carved stele and stone monuments of the Americas. Those connections inform much of my own work, and I always try to find that relationship in the objects that I collect."

The imagery of the similarly scaled **Latin American Memorial** series of 1989-90 (see catalogue ill., page 46) was built up from photocopied images of outdoor installations done for an exhibition in Washington D.C. In a tribute to both political and ecological suffering of Central and South American nations, the original site-specific works evoked traditional burial mounds and commemorative cenotaph forms. After collaging these photocopies onto larger sheets of paper, Cardillo began to build up an encrusted surface using the materials he found around his New York studio — copper shavings, rust powders, sawdust

particles, and various glues were thrown into oil stick and chalk pastel drawings. In the resulting works, the initial photo-based images are literally buried beneath layers of abstraction, leaving rough silhouettes that symbolically reiterate the concepts of entombment and concealment. The materials continue to interact with each other and the elements, causing these surfaces to change and evolve over time — and Cardillo appreciates this aspect of the work. He speaks of their thick layers as having a connection to archeological sites — the underlying imagery needing to be excavated and reconstructed to determine its meaning. The original outdoor installations were permutations on the human form molded in adobe, cast from cement and cutout with zinc, and a sense of the exhumation of buried remains is a subtext of these abstracted works on paper.

Beyond Printmaking

Installations and Castings in the 1990s and Today

During the early 1990s, Cardillo began to silkscreen large, unstretched canvases. These works were hung with grommets and hooks, and like the grand tapestry cycles produced in medieval Europe, covered entire walls and transformed whole rooms into densely textured environments. One such series of wall hangings called the *Vanishing Tapestries* were printed with the same imagery that appears in the ***Archeological Prints*** of 1991-93 (see catalogue Plates XX - XXI, page 34-35). Cardillo made photographs and plaster casts of animal carcasses — ducks, minks, armadillos, and partridges — that he would come across, and incorporate them into both his two and three-dimensional work. In the *Archeological Prints*, images of animal remains are juxtaposed against photographs of excavated human bones recorded by anthropologists working in the field. Cardillo maintains a network of associations with anthropologists and archeologists throughout the world who eagerly share their research and studies. The human skeletons in the *Archeological Prints* are the remains of ancient cultures — some 7,000 years old — excavated in far-flung areas of the Americas. Archeological sites in Uruguay, Peru, Ecuador, and other regions of South America yield finds that bear remarkable parallels with digs in the Mississippi River Valley and other parts of the North American continent. For Cardillo, this geographical diffusion of early peoples speaks to common pasts and cultural connections that have relevance and import for society today. The juxtaposition of evidence — endangered animal species shown together with extinct human civilizations — creates layers of meaning, challenging viewers to contemplate not only their own evolution, but also their relations to other living species and the surrounding natural world. The black-and-white format of the *Archeological Prints* conveys a hard-hitting matter-of-factness — as if the images were snapshots of a recent crime scene. Not since the *Cicadas and Moths* silkscreens of the early 1970s has Cardillo employed such a graphic rawness, and here again it is used to introduce an element of urgency and immediacy into discourses of environmental preservation and cultural détente.

Cardillo began teaching at the State University of New York at New Paltz in 1994. This move inaugurated a long-term, ongoing relationship with the unique environment of the Hudson River Valley and the ecological system of the Shawangunk Mountain Range. Throughout his tenure at SUNY New Paltz, Cardillo has worked with his students on numerous large-scale projects, including a large outdoor wall

mural constructed of ceramic tiles printed with iconic images culled from Cardillo's art of the 1990s. Cardillo's work increasingly blends two realities, his Latin American roots in Uruguay and his adopted home in the United States. The artist's interest in the preservation of the virgin forests of the Amazonian basin parallel and compliment his deep commitment to sustaining the environment and ecology of the Hudson Valley region.

The 1995 *Project for Sao Paulo Biennale* prints (see catalogue Plate XXIII, page 52) were developed for a never-executed installation that Cardillo proposed for the international art exposition that takes place every two years in Brazil. The series formulates an abbreviated guidebook to the sculptural forms and iconic imagery explored by Cardillo in the mid-1990s: *cupí* (conical earthen mounds patterned upon ancient Meso-American burial sites), catafalques (architectural structures displaying the flayed skins of large cats and other endangered species), fossils (ossified remains recording a plenitude of past life now extinct), and Tlazolteotl (the Aztec mother goddess of fertility and birth, more often than not emblazoned in the prints upon mirror-like reflective foils). These images — circulating around themes of loss and continuity, prehistory and its accessibility — are printed upon heavily textured panels of vintage wallpaper. Resembling sandpaper or corkboard or burlap, these brown and tan wallpapers salvaged from 1940s and 1950s sample books carry their own allusions — past and present, natural and cultural — that enhance the repertoire and expand the dialogue instigated by the images.

"Cupí" is a Guarní word for the giant conical mounds created by a certain species of ant building its extensive underground habitat. In an exchange between nature and culture, the *cupí* retain formal links to tumuli, or the prehistoric burial mounds of aboriginal peoples throughout the Americas. The Minuanes, the Yaros, the Timbúes, the Chaná-beguáes, and the Charruás are the names of the South American tribes decimated by the "empire construction" and "nation building" that were often little more than pretenses for genocide. The few remaining members of the indigenous Charruás tribe indigenous to Uruguay, for example, were annihilated during the 19th century. Savagely slaughtered by the same armed forces that sought an independent Uruguayan nation-state in the 1830s and then finally wiped out by an opportunistic smallpox epidemic in the 1860s, the Charruás were victims of both ethnic cleansing and germ warfare. Cardillo's work adeptly explores the links between the historical norms that kill off indigenous peoples and the cultural habits that exploit animal and plant life. The metaphorical and allusive are hallmarks of an art that reveals how such inconspicuous and unobtrusive processes of destruction pervade contemporary existence.

Photographs and sketches — items compiled and collected over years of travel and study — point to Cardillo's continuing concern for the survival of native peoples and preservation of natural ecosystems across political barriers and societal divides. Cardillo seeks out some of the most remote regions of the South American continent, places such as the Pantanal (the southern Amazon region that remains one of the largest continuous tracts of undisturbed wetlands on earth), or the rustic cattle ranches (called estancias) of the Uruguayan interior. Cardillo records his observations in travel diaries, and these sketchbooks supplied the imagery for the ongoing *El Pantanal* and *En la estancia (On the Ranch)* series of woodcuts, both started in 1998 (see ill., page 47; see Plate XVIII, page 27). Using an overhead projector to enlarge his small pencil drawings, Cardillo traces his linear outlines onto expansive sheets of plywood.

"I have a relationship with the estancias and with the men leading the life of the gauchos. For me, being on the estancias is like being with friends. When made, the sketches were about describing daily life — there were no pretensions about creating a work of art. The sketches come from how I react instinctively to life on the estancias. I also take a great number of photographs, but on the estancias the camera is not enough. One must take out a pencil and make a small notation. This is how the series of woodcuts started — as an emotional reaction to life, with no pretenses."

Cardillo's enlarged linear notations, combined with the overall texture of the printed wood grain, result in some of the most elegant and appealing prints of Cardillo's career. It seems fitting that, in these works that borrow from Cardillo's personal diaries about life in Uruguay, the artist has returned to the woodcut medium first explored at the beginnings of his artistic career.

"There is a rich tradition of woodcuts in Uruguay — because metal plates are expensive and lithography stones come from Germany, wood is the most natural element that we have. Many people influenced my work in woodcut — Luis Mazzey, Antonio Frasconi, Carlos Gonzales, and then I had contact with all the woodcut printers at the Printmakers Club of Montevideo. Mazzey was one of my professors; and Gonzales is considered the José Guadalupe Posada of Uruguay — but Posada printed with metal plates and Gonzales made woodcuts."

The correspondences between casting and printing — both means of making impressions and imprints — run throughout Cardillo's recent work. The images used to produce the ***Birds of Gardiner*** photo-silkscreens of 2003 (see catalogue Plate XVII, page 26) come from a series of wax casts. To produce these sculptural objects, plaster molds were taken of the dead bodies of small birds Cardillo found on and around his property, located near the town of Gardiner in New York's mid-Hudson Valley. The plaster is poured over the carcass through a grid of metal screens or wire meshes that keep the plaster rigid and stable once it has dried. From this first "negative" cast of the bird, other "positive" casts can be made. According to Cardillo, he can sometimes obtain both latex and wax pieces from one plaster cast. The direct casting maintains the actual scale of the animal's bodies, and this, combined with the bits of feathers or hair or scales trapped in the casts, can make a creature's physical presence quite palpable.

"I learned casting techniques at the school of fine arts, first in Montevideo and then in Germany, from master craftsmen who made amazing plaster casts of clay or wax models in the process of producing bronze sculpture. These professors were amazing, possessing secrets about technical processes that had been passed down for generations."

Using the techniques that he became well versed in during his artistic training, Cardillo has also produced a series of ***Bronze Casts*** (see catalogue Plate XIX, page 30) at foundries in New York, Mexico, and Uruguay. Always relishing the process of production, Cardillo left some of his bronzes with their casting channels (or troughs) intact, and with bits of sand and plaster still adhering to their surfaces.

Cardillo recounts the accidental deaths that initiate each work in the *Birds of Gardiner* series — the birds fly into the windows because they see the sky reflected in the glass and think it is open space. It is a simple, matter-of-fact explanation, but one that clearly both fascinates and troubles the artist. These flying creatures have not naturally evolved the ability to distinguish between real and reflected light on a vertical surface. Such a difficulty in perceiving depth and flatness is, no doubt, of exceeding interest to a visual artist so self-consciously involved with the incremental translation of three dimensions into two. A failure to see accurately is (for humans no less than other animals) a common cause of accidents and destruction. Townspeople who build houses in the countryside (the artist being among them) did not intentionally set out to harm these delicate creatures, but they had a role in their demise nonetheless. Though on a small scale, for Cardillo these prints record yet another destructive consequence of man's intrusions upon the natural environment. Premeditation is not the issue, but the damaging results of building construction and land development are being scrutinized. The modesty of Cardillo's imagery makes such insights "hit home" in a literal (and thereby very strategic) way.

In some of the *Birds of Gardiner* prints, as many as eight colors of ink have been applied to create the rich texture of the final image — and a single color could be passed through the screen more than once to create a dozen or more layers of ink on each sheet. Cardillo describes his procedures and aims:

"The images are prints and paintings at the same time. It is a process of translating from three dimensions to two dimensions. Photographs of the wax casts are first manipulated on the computer. From these revised and modified images, acetates are produced for the silkscreens — each image uses two or three different screens. Each print is built up of many different layers of screened information. Later layers often cover up much of the information underneath, but it makes a difference in the final print. Sometimes I think a print is lost, but then I screen one more layer and it comes back, but in a way that is different than if each one of the previous layers were not beneath the last."

For each of the ten images in the series, there is what one might call a more-or-less standard version, usually printed in a muted shade of brown, olive, or black. However, unique variations were also made in which Cardillo began by sponging ink directly on the paper to form an intense puddle or stain on which the image was then screened. Cooler and more brilliant shades such as lavender or rose were also used to create, from one screen, an array of variations — with both subtle and striking differences.

The values that became synonymous with student movements of the late 1960s — liberation, freedom, openness, and commitment — are ideals that continue to inform the work of this discerning image maker. As an artist of Uruguayan descent living in the United States since the late 1970s, Rimer Cardillo has explored disparate cultures and negotiated socio-political differences through an artistic practice rooted in printmaking but spanning a range of creative media. Trained as a printmaker, Cardillo's graphic impulse and technical expertise have expanded to embrace sculpture, objects, collections, installations, and environments. Working amidst the dictatorial oppression in Uruguay of the 1970s, he strove to maintain a tradition of free expression in opposition to totalitarian censorship. His work, however, communicates not only the most egregious aspects of oppression, but also its more salient and insidious nature. The artist's work cannot be separated from his social commitment to the preservation of

indigenous cultures, the protection of endangered species, and the preservation of vulnerable environments. Through his art, Rimer Cardillo shares with viewers a searching inquiry into relations across borders and a rigorous investigation of continuities between historical epochs. There is within Cardillo's intricately constructed images and objects, a tight orchestration of the technical and the theoretical that enables a dialogue of the present with the past, a vigorous union of the formal and conceptual that fortifies a mediation of the personal with the political.

Notes

1. This and all subsequent quotes from Rimer Cardillo are from conversations with the artist that occurred during the organization of the exhibition during 2003 and 2004.

2. One of the best sources in English for information regarding this darkest of episodes in Uruguayan history is the series of journalistic reports by Lawrence Weschler, first published as the investigative articles "A Miracle, A Universe, Parts I and II" in *The New Yorker* magazine (25 May 1987, pp. 69-84 and 86; and 1 June 1987, pp. 72-80 and 82-93), and since collected in the book *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers* (University of Chicago Press, 1998). Uruguay was not isolated in its descent into turmoil; the similarities and differences between Uruguay's situation and the rise of military forces in both Argentina (to the west) and Brazil (to the north) is deftly analyzed in this useful account.

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