

Art

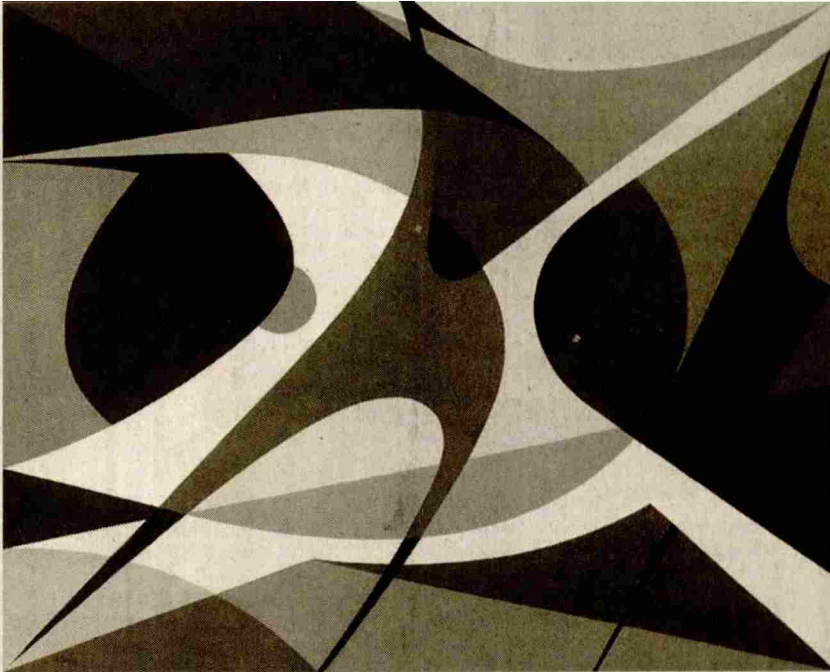
Roberta Smith

The modern geometric art of the Americas. The phrase doesn't exactly have the ring of authority, but give it time. Its story is only beginning to emerge. In New York the postwar abstraction of South America has recently been the subject of eye-opening exhibitions at the Grey Art Gallery at New York University and the Museum of Modern Art; last fall El Museo del Barrio reopened with a vibrant examination of

the cross-pollination between North and South American artists during the 20th century.

Starting Wednesday the **NEWARK MUSEUM** will do its bit with the sweetly titled **"CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT: ABSTRACT ART IN SOUTH AND NORTH AMERICA, 1920S-50S."** This exhibition of painting, sculpture and photography will focus on a strain of hard-edged abstraction that has not really received its due on either continent. While some of the North Americans are well known (Alexander Calder, Ellsworth Kelly, Aaron Siskind), more are unfamiliar like John

Ferren, Charles Biederman, Gertrude Greene and Joe H. Herrera, an intriguing American Indian painter. The South American headliners include Lygia Clark and Joaquín Torres-García along with artists like Willys de Castro, who were among the surprises of the Grey Art Gallery show, and others far less known, like the Uruguayan painter Amalia Nieto. Expect some eerie separated-at-birth similarities — the right-angle compositions of Burgoyne Diller and Tomás Maldonado, for example — along with other surprises. Like its immediate predecessors, this show presents a history whose telling is long overdue. *Through May 23, 49 Washington Street, Newark; (973) 596-6550, newarkmuseum.org.*



COLECCIÓN GALERÍA OSCAR PRATO, MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY

Antonio Llorens's "Composición, 1952" in "Constructive Spirit: Abstract Art in South and North America, 1920s-50s" at the Newark Museum.

