

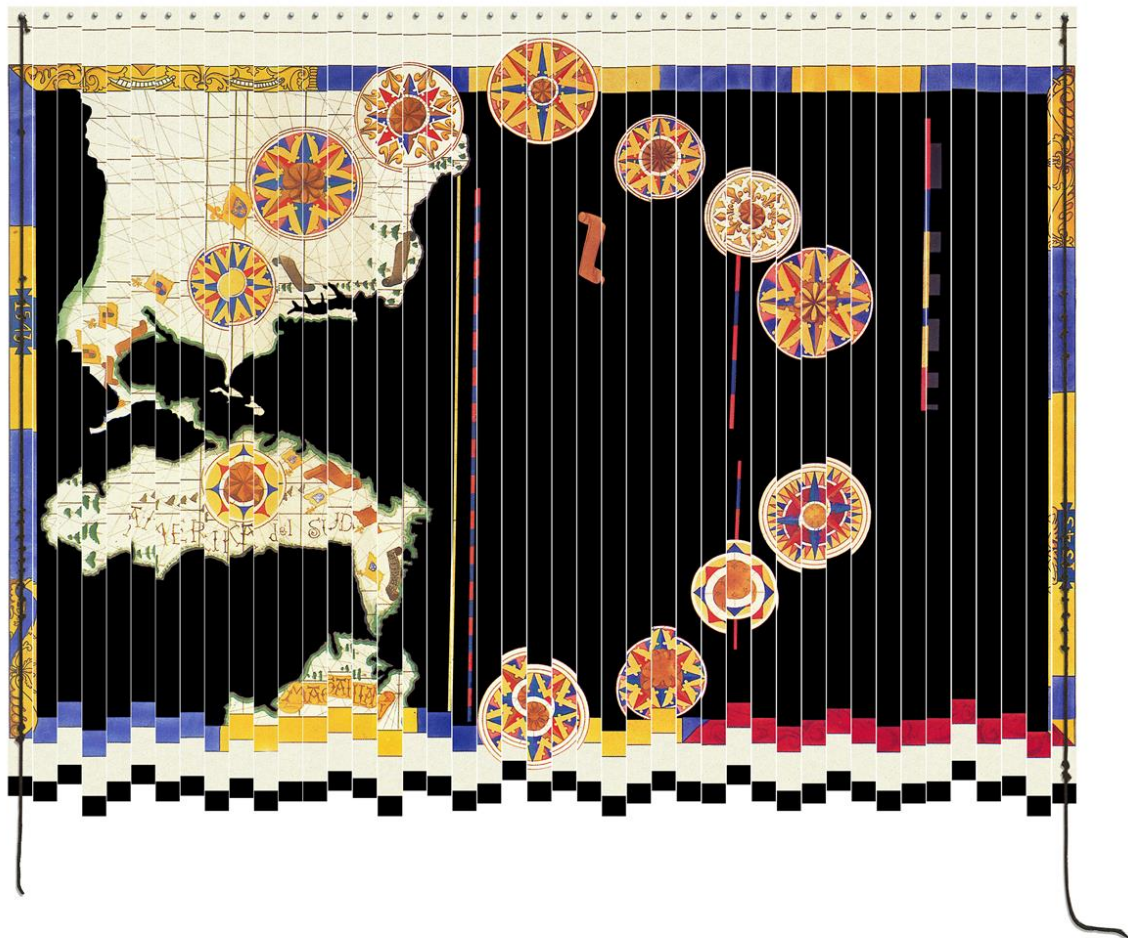
Sicardi

Ayers
Bacino

Miguel Angel Ríos: *Torn to Shreds*

Opening Reception with the Artist: Thursday, January 17, 6-8pm

Exhibition: January 17 - March 23, 2019



Miguel Angel Ríos, *MAGAILLAN*, 1992-1993. Cibachrome mounted on canvas, polyester cord and push pins, 196 13/16 x 151 9/16 in.

Miguel Angel Ríos: *Torn to Shreds*

January 17 - March 23, 2019

Sicardi | Ayers | Bacino proudly presents our third solo exhibition for Argentine artist **Miguel Angel Ríos**. The opening reception with the artist will take place **Thursday, January 17, 6–8pm**. The show includes a selection of pieces from his *Mapa* series which he started in the 1990s, following the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus to the Caribbean Islands.

Miguel Angel Ríos studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires before moving to New York in the 1970s to escape the military dictatorship in Argentina. He subsequently relocated to Mexico and now divides his time between the U.S. and Mexico. In his work, Ríos pairs a rigorous conceptual approach with a meticulously constructed and often handmade aesthetic. Since the 1970s, he has created art addressing the concept of the "Latin American," using this idea as both an artistic strategy and a political problem. In the 1990s, he began creating this series of maps, which he carefully folded and pleated by hand. Marking the 500th anniversary of the "discovery" of the Americas, the maps indicate long histories of power and colonial experience, and they reference traditional indigenous arts in the Americas, including the Andean quipu. With text written by curator Martina Sabbadini, *Torn to Shreds* "draw[s] our attention to the political act of map drawing, through a series of geometric gestures." Miguel Angel Ríos "modifies maps from the Colonial period into new complex compositions through the acts of amplifying, cutting, folding, pleating and pasting. He literally shreds enlarged photographic facsimiles of Colonial documents to question and resist the arbitrariness of frontiers."

Miguel Angel Ríos's works are represented in several major collections including The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Houston, TX, USA; The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, NY, USA; Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, New York, NY, USA; Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), Miami, FL, USA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA, USA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, USA; Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ, USA; Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá, Colombia; Fundación Arte y Mecenazgo, "la Caixa", Barcelona, Spain; Fundación Costantini, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano (MALBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina; La Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France; and the Museo Nacional, Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston is featuring a projection of Miguel Angel Ríos's video *On the Edge* on January 29, and it will be on view through February 24, 2019. View more about the video projection [here](#).

For more information, please call 713.529.1313, visit www.sicardi.com, or email William Isbell at william@sicardi.com or Annalisa Palmieri Briscoe at annalisa@sicardi.com.

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Torn to Shreds
Miguel Angel Ríos

January 17 to
March 23, 2019

Mapa-Poncho, 1995-96
Cibachrome mounted on canvas and push pins
90 15/16 × 93 11/16 in. (231 × 238 cm.)



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Los Cuatro Vientos, 1993-94
Pencil, Cibachrome mounted on pleated canvas and push pins
Diameter = 74 3/4 in. (190 cm.)

Over the last forty years, Miguel Angel Ríos's artistic practice combines photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, video and performance to create symbolic narratives of resistance to the political, cultural and socio-geographical domination in Latin America.

Miguel Angel Ríos emigrated to the United States in the 1970s to escape the Argentine military dictatorship and has lived and worked mostly in New York and Mexico City ever since. Central to many of his works is the concept of border and the critique of arbitrary manmade landscape divisions.

For his solo exhibition at Sicardi | Ayers | Bacino he presents works from his *Mapas* series, initially created in the 1990s reacting to the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus to the Caribbean Islands, and criticizing the so-called "Discovery of America."

Since ancient times, celestial and terrestrial cartographers were confronted with the problem of how to represent a portion of a sphere on a flat surface; soon, it became clear that some distortions were inevitable. In 1569, Mercator drew a map that was convenient for navigation; while distorting distances and areas, it preserved angles and imposed a grid-like structure. By the nineteenth century, mathematicians had developed Ptolemy's and Mercator's ideas into a geometry that underlies modern physics. A repeatedly restated corollary of these scientific works is an essential lack of neutral context, an unavoidable percolation of the political into cartography, geography and concept formation.

Just like this scientific tale, the works from the *Mapas* series draw our attention to the political act of map drawing, through a series of geometric gestures. Specifically, the artist modifies maps from the Colonial period into new complex compositions through the acts of amplifying, cutting, folding, pleating and pasting.

He literally shreds enlarged photographic facsimiles of Colonial documents to question and resist the arbitrariness of frontiers.

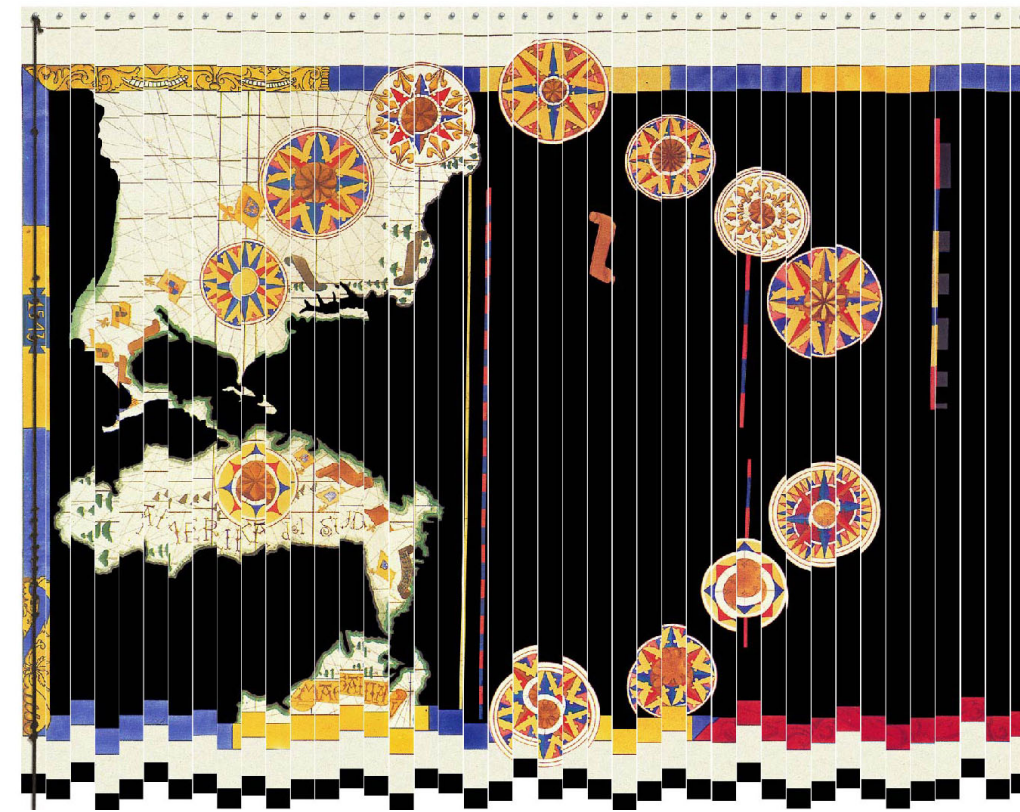
The works, hanging on the walls of the gallery, confront us with a size that could potentially envelop a viewer's body. Fragmented by regular vertical lines, in the work *Magallan* titled after the captain of the fleet that first circumnavigated the earth, we can still recognize the lands while the sea has been painted in black, erasing the nautical trajectories followed by the colonial ships.

In *Los Cuatros Vientos*, no territory is mapped; the map is deconstructed beyond recognition through a crisscrossing of lines unfolding around a circular form that erases the north-south dichotomy.

In *Mapa-Poncho*, the center of the map has been removed. The title refers to a traditional sleeveless garment used by the Native American peoples of the Andes since pre-Hispanic times. This work gauges the limits between cartography and everyday life by combining an instrument of territorial control designed by the conquistadors with a garment that survived the conquest. This work might evoke the legend described by Jorge Luis Borges in *Of Exactitude in Science* (1933-34) in which the Argentinian writer describes an emperor so obsessed with cartography that he orders a map of his empire at a one-to-one scale of such precision that map and territory become interchangeable.

In Texas, a state that once belonged to Mexico, the current political climate sheds new light on Ríos's maps, which were probably less explicit in the 90s, a period in which borders seemed ever more stable and irrelevant and in which walls were falling. What this light sheds is a dark omen on the horizon, an ever present vision of armies and domination based on arbitrary, manmade frontiers.

Martina Sabbadini
Independent Curator



Magallan, 1992-93
Cibachrome mounted on canvas, polyester cord and push pins
196 13/16 × 151 9/16 in. (500 × 385 cm.)



Las estrellas nos guían, 1992-93
Cibachrome mounted on pleated canvas and push pins
112 9/16 × 91 5/16 in. (286 × 232 cm.)