

DIANE DE POLIGNAC

SERGIO DE CASTRO (1922-2012)



An Argentine artist, Sergio de Castro settled in Paris in 1949. After studying architecture, he became a composer before being overcome by his passion for painting. The versatile artist became famous in the realm of monumental art with the completion of three stained glass ensembles.

BIOGRAPHY

SERGIO DE CASTRO'S EARLY LIFE AND ARTISTIC TRAINING

Born on 15 September 1922 in Buenos Aires, Sergio de Castro spent his childhood between Lausanne, Switzerland, and Turin, Italy. The young Sergio learned Spanish in Uruguay and began writing his first poems. In 1939, at the age of 17, Sergio de Castro walked along the Uruguayan coast by himself, travelling from Montevideo to Brazil. It was then that he met Joaquín Torres-García (1874-1949), an artist whose teaching would play a decisive role in the Argentine's development. At his father's request, Sergio de Castro spent a year studying architecture; meanwhile, he was already active as a composer and also began to explore drawing and painting.

SERGIO DE CASTRO AND MUSIC

A multi-talented and precocious artist, Sergio de Castro also expressed himself through music, which he studied from 1933 to 1938. He wrote musical works that were performed in concert for the first time in 1940 at the University of Montevideo. It was then that he was spotted by the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler and the composer Alberto Ginastera.

In 1945, Sergio de Castro moved to Córdoba in Argentina, where he worked as the assistant of the composer Manuel de Falla for 18 months, until the latter's death. In 1947, the actress Cecilia Ingenieros—a student of the dancer Martha Graham—staged a ballet at the Teatro del Pueblo in Buenos Aires based on Sergio de Castro's musical work *Doce variaciones breves*. Two years later, he was appointed as a professor of music history at the new conservatory in La Plata, Argentina. With the help of a grant from the French government, Sergio de Castro moved to Paris in 1949 to complete his musical training. The following year, he joined the music group Zodiaque, which was headed by the composer Maurice Ohana.

Although Sergio de Castro eventually put music aside to devote himself to painting, he was still regularly invited to musical events. The Maillon cultural center (in Strasbourg), for example, exhibited a series of works during a musical week dedicated to Maurice Ohana and the music of the Hesperides in 1986. In the same year, Sergio de Castro was invited to the Festival des Musiques Actuelles Nice Côte d'Azur (the 'MANCA' Festival). In 1992, Silvina Luz Mansilla published the first volume of her *Diccionario De La Musica Espanola E Hispanoamericana* in Spain, which included a text on the musical work of Sergio de Castro.

THE ARTIST SERGIO DE CASTRO IN ARGENTINA

Sergio de Castro settled in Buenos Aires in 1942 and had his first exhibition at the Ateneo de Montevideo. His work was also exhibited at the Torres García studio—an organisation founded in 1943 by the artist Joaquín

Torres-García to enable young artists to access training. The following year, Sergio de Castro, Joaquín Torres-García and his students worked together on a series of murals for the Martirén Pavilion of the Saint Bois Hospital in Montevideo. Sergio de Castro took part in the group exhibition *Pintura uruguaya*, which was held at Comte Gallery in Buenos Aires, in the same year. In 1946, he travelled to the northwest of Argentina and the south of Peru to study pre-Columbian art, accompanied by the painters Gonzalo Fonseca, Julio Alpuy and Jonio Montiel.

Sergio de Castro moved back to Buenos Aires in 1947. The following year, he was presented at the Salon of the Santa Fe Museum of Fine Arts. His works were also presented at the Viao Gallery, the Bonino Gallery and the Van Riel Gallery. In 1987, the Museo de Arte Moderno in Buenos Aires organised a retrospective dedicated to the artist's work, which presented some one hundred works.

THE ARTIST SERGIO DE CASTRO IN FRANCE

Sergio de Castro was awarded a grant by the French government in 1949 and settled permanently in Paris in November of the same year. In 1950, the artist was hospitalised due to severe asthma attacks at the Necker Hospital in Paris, where he spent much time drawing. The following year, he painted a monumental work in oil on canvas measuring 160 x 300 cm, which he called *El Puerto*. From then on, he retired from his activities as a composer to devote himself to painting and stained glass work. In 1952, Sergio de Castro had his first solo exhibition in Paris, at the Galerie Jeanne Castel, where he presented a collection of still lifes. Starting to paint with egg tempera, he went on to exhibit his works at the Galerie Pierre. He was also represented in the French capital by the Galerie Max Kaganovich, the Galerie Rive-Gauche and the Galerie Charpentier.

Sergio de Castro met many artists—such as Picasso, whom he met in Paris and in the South of France where he went in summer—and exhibited alongside Bazaine, Picasso, Lansky and de Staël. In 1953, Sergio de Castro set up his studio at 16 bis Rue du Saint-Gothard in Paris' 14th arrondissement, where he began work on his large linear compositions.

The artist became a naturalised French citizen in 1979 and was made a Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et Lettres and then an Officer of the Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 1999. In 2003, he made preparations for a donation of works to the Museum of Saint-Lô (Normandy) with the curator Michel Carduner. In 2006, the entire donation (comprising 220 works) was presented to the Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Histoire in Saint-Lô.

STAINED GLASS IN SERGIO DE CASTRO'S WORK

Sergio de Castro was a multi-faceted artist. In addition to paintings and music, he also created a number of stained glass works. In 1956, Sergio de Castro began work on a

monumental stained-glass work entitled *La Création du Monde* [The Creation of the World]. Measuring 6 x 20 metres, the work was designed for the church of the Benedictine Monastery of Saint-Sacrement in Couvrechef-la-Folie, near Caen—a building rebuilt after the war. In 1968, he created a 4.5 x 17 metre stained glass window for the 1st Lutheran Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Kirche in Hamburg. In 1979, Sergio de Castro began work on the composition of five stained glass windows for the Collegiate Church of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption in Romont, Fribourg (Switzerland), which were installed two years later. In 1980, he was invited to the 1st Salon of Stained Glass at the International Stained-Glass Centre in Chartres, France, where he presented *Résurrection*, a stained glass work measuring 4.2 x 1.2 metres.

The 1st Festival of Contemporary Sacred Art presented an exhibition dedicated to Sergio de Castro with 72 works from 1948-1978 on religious subjects at the Musée Diocésain d'Art Religieux in 1988. In the book *Les Trésors de la France*, published in 1988, the author Michel Parent wrote two texts in the section on "Contemporary Stained Glass", entitled *Audin-court et Fernand Léger* and *La Folie-Couvrechef et Sergio de Castro*. In 2008, the Saint-Lô Museum presented the exhibition *50 ans d'Art du Vitrail autour de Sergio de Castro* and then inaugurated the stained glass windows *Abécédaire* and *Chiffres* in 2012.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR THE ARTIST SERGIO DE CASTRO

Several retrospectives have been devoted to the artist in many countries. Sergio de Castro went to the United Kingdom for the first time in 1957 and had his first solo exhibition in London at the Matthiesen Gallery the following year. In 1962, the editor of *Apollo* magazine, Denys Sutton, organised an exhibition of his work at the Leicester Gallery before publishing a monograph on Sergio de Castro in 1964. A solo exhibition of the artist's work entitled *Homages and Variations* was presented at the French Institute in London in 1987, exhibiting 30 works from 1957-1975 inspired by Dürer, Holbein, El Greco and Vermeer.

Sergio de Castro also had strong ties to Switzerland, his childhood home. His work was presented in 1958 in Lucerne at the Kunst-Museum in a group exhibition entitled *Junge Maler aus Deutschland und Frankreich*. In 1966, the artist was presented in a major retrospective exhibition at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Fribourg, where 103 of the artist's works were shown. A solo exhibition of Sergio de Castro's work was organised at the Castle of Gruyères in 2008.

Sergio de Castro's work also became well known in Germany, where it was featured at the Documenta II exhibition in Kassel in 1959. Hans Platte organised the first

retrospective of Sergio de Castro's work in an exhibition comprising 110 works at the Kunstverein in Hamburg in 1965. The following year, the exhibition *Variationen über ein Thema* organised by Thomas Grochowiak at the Städtische Kunsthalle in Recklinghausen presented eight variations on Le Greco by Sergio de Castro. The exhibition would include works by Francis Bacon, Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, among others.

In Italy, Sergio de Castro participated in the Biennale Francia-Italia at the Palazzo delle Arte al Valentino in Turin in 1956. The gallery owner Bruno Lorenzelli then presented 40 works by the artist in Milan in 1963 and in Bergamo in 1964. In 1980, Sergio de Castro participated in the 39th *Venice Biennale*, where he presented large-format works from the 1970s in the Argentine Pavilion.

Sergio de Castro was also exhibited in the United States. In 1960, the artist won the fourth prize in the Fifth International Hallmark Art Award alongside the painters Alechinsky, Marsicano and Charchoune. In 1972, he exhibited at the Wildenstein Gallery in London and the Museo Nacional de Bellas-Artes in Buenos Aires. In 1995, he participated in a group exhibition at the Chac-Mool Gallery in Los Angeles.

Sergio de Castro died in Paris on 31 December 2012. He was laid to rest in the Montparnasse cemetery.

Mathilde Gubanski © Galerie Diane de Polignac

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Peter Stuyvesant Foundation
Auxerre (France), Saint-Georges-sur-Baulche, the Library of Yonne
Bern (Switzerland), Swiss National Library, Georges Borgeaud Collection
Bremen (Germany), Kunsthalle
Caen (France), Benedictine Monastery of Saint-Sacrement in Couvrechef-la-Folie
Hamburg (Germany), Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Kirche
La Défense, Paris (France), Atochem company entrance hall
Luxembourg City (Luxembourg), National Museum of History and Art
Montevideo (Uruguay), Martiréné Pavilion of the Saint-Bois Hospital
Paris, France, Centre National des Arts Plastiques
Paris, Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (FNAC)
Romont, Fribourg (Switzerland), Collegiate Church of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption
Saint-Lô (France), Musée des Beaux-Arts
Sélestat (France), Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (FRAC) Alsace
Vienna, MUMOK
Vienna, Museum of the Twentieth Century

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Taller Torres-Garcia, group exhibition, Ateneo de Montevideo, Montevideo, every year from 1942 to 1949
Pintura Uruguaya, group exhibition, Comte Gallery, Buenos Aires, 1944
Augusto y Horacio Torres-Garcia, Sergio de Castro, Jonio Montiel, group exhibition, Galeria Viau, Buenos Aires, 1947
Donation de los Santos, group exhibition, Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes, Sante Fe, 1948
Concours Air France, group exhibition, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1951
Solo exhibition, Galerie Jeanne Castel, Paris, 1952
Solo exhibitions, Bonino Gallery, Buenos Aires, 1952, 1956
Prix Buhrlé, group exhibition, Galerie Kaganovitch, Paris, 1953
Solo exhibition, Galerie Pierre (Pierre Loeb), Paris, 1954
Solo exhibition, Van Riel Gallery, Buenos Aires, 1955
Dibujos de artistas argentinos, group exhibition, Bonino Gallery, Buenos Aires, 1955
Peintres contemporains présentés par René de Soliers, group exhibition, Centre Culturel International, Cerisy-La-Salle, 1955
Solo exhibitions, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1961
Solo exhibitions, Galerie Rive-gauche, Paris, 1955, 1958
Solo exhibition, Galerie Rive-Gauche, Paris, 1956
Art Contemporain, group exhibition, Château d'Harcourt, Chauvigny, 1956
Sélectionnés de la Critique, group exhibition, Galerie Saint-Placide, Paris, 1956

Biennale Francia-Italia, Palazzo delle Arti al Valentino, Turin, 1957, 1959
Junge maler aus Deutschland und Frankreich, Kunstmuseum, Luzern, 1958
Solo exhibitions, Matthiesen Gallery, London, 1958, 1961
Group exhibition, John Moore Foundation, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1959
Documenta II, Kassel, 1959
Peintres et Sculpteurs Argentins, group exhibition, Comité France-Amérique, Grand Palais, Paris, 1959
Recent Acquisitions, group exhibition, Arts Council, London, 1959
5th International Hallmark Art Award, Wildenstein Gallery, New York, 1960
Group exhibition, Sesquicentenario, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, 1960
Art Sacré, group exhibition, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris, 1960
Arte Argentina Contemporanea, group exhibition, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1960
Arte Argentina Contemporanea, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1961
Group exhibitions, Leicester Gallery, London, 1962, 1963
Solo exhibitions, Galeria Lorenzelli, Milan, 1963, 1964
Art Argentin actuel, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris, 1963
Solo exhibition, Bettie Thommen Gallery, Basel, 1964
Retrospective, Kunstverein (110 works from 1955 to 1965), Hamburg, 1965
Art Contemporain, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 1965
Artes Visuales I, Museo Eduardo Sívori, Buenos Aires, 1965
Natures-Mortes, group exhibition, Obere Zaune Gallery, Zurich, 1965
Variationen über ein Thema, Städtische Kunsthalle, Recklinghausen, 1966
Retrospective, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire (103 works from 1955 to 1966), Fribourg, 1966
Von Bauhaus bis zum Gegenwart, Kunsthalle, Hamburg, 1967
Zauberdes Lichtes, Städtische Kunsthalle, Recklinghausen, 1967
De Lautrec à Matthieu, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg, 1968
Touring retrospective (45 works from 1961 to 1966), the Kunstforening in Holstebro, the Kunstforening in Oslo, and the Kunstindustrimuseet in Copenhagen, 1970
Racolta Pomini, group exhibition, Galeria Il Milione, Milan, 1970
Castro Landscape of Light, solo exhibition, Wildenstein Gallery, London, 1972
Solo exhibition, Galerie Jacob, Paris, 1972, 1974
Solo exhibition, Château de Ville-d'Avray, 1973
Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Paris, 1973, 1974
Group exhibitions, Galerie Jacob, Paris, 1973, 1996
Solo exhibition, Galerie Monique Delcourt, Valenciennes, 1974
Art Fair, Düsseldorf, 1974
Solo exhibition, French Cultural Centre, Luxembourg, 1975
Touring retrospective (91 works from 1965 to 1975), the Kunsthalle in Bremen, the Tempelhof in Berlin and the Kunstamt (Berlin Festival), 1975

Retrospective (68 works from 1956 to 1966), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen, 1975-76

Signe du Sacré au XX^e siècle, Church of Saint-Philibert, Dijon, 1977

Typographie-Écritures, group exhibition, Maison de la Culture, Rennes, 1978

Group exhibition, FRAC Alsace, Strasbourg, 1978

Le Regard du Peintre, group exhibition, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1978-79

Solo exhibition, Galerie Valmay, Paris, 1979

Tribute to Pierre Loeb, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris, 1979

1^{er} Salon du Vitrail, International Stained-Glass Centre, Chartres, 1980

Solo exhibition, "Syn-Art" Association, Paris, 1980

Retrospective (12 large-format works from the 1970s), XXXIX Biennale, Argentine Pavilion, Venice, 1980

Retrospective (100 works from 1940 to 1974), Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires, 1987

Sergio de Castro à Atochem, solo exhibition, La Défense, Paris, 1987

Solo exhibition, French Institute, London, 1987

Solo exhibitions, Galerie des Ambassades, Paris, 1988, 1989

Solo exhibitions, Galerie Galarté, Paris, 1988, 1995

Retrospective (religious subjects 1948-1978), 1st Festival of Contemporary Sacred Art, Musée Diocésain d'Art Religieux, Bayeux, 1988

Retrospective (48 works from 1972 to 1978), Town Hall, Sochaux, 1991

Castro donation, solo exhibition, Vitromusée Romont, Swiss Museum of Stained Glass, Romont, 1991-92

Renaissance d'une Ville, Normandy Museum, Caen, 1994

Artistas latinoamericanos en sus estudio, group exhibition, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico, 1994

Group exhibition, Chac Mool Gallery, Los Angeles, 1995-96

Solo exhibition, Galería Sur, Punta del Este (Uruguay), 1998

Salon d'Automne, Paris, 1999

Torres-Garcia et ses disciples, group exhibition, Galerie Ileana Bouboulis, Paris, 2002

Castro donation, solo exhibition, Saint-Lô Museum, Saint-Lô, 2006-07

Solo exhibition, Château de Gruyère (Switzerland), 2008

50 ans de vitrail autour de Sergio de Castro, group exhibition, Saint-Lô Museum, Saint-Lô, 2008-09

Solo exhibition, Museo Gurvich, Montevideo, 2009

Francine Del Pierre et Sergio de Castro, group exhibition, Francine Del Pierre and Fance Franck Studio, Paris, 2010

Mujeres esculturas – Varones pintores, group exhibition, Galerie Argentine, Paris, 2013

Hommage à Sergio de Castro, group exhibition, Galerie Orsay, Paris, 2013

Rayuela, el París de Cortazar, group exhibition, Institut Cervantes, Paris, 2013

De l'Impressionnisme à l'abstraction. Festival Normandie Impressionniste, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Saint-Lô, 2013

Hommage à Jacques Thuillier, un historien d'art à Nevers, group exhibition, Musée de la Faïence et Médiathèque, Nevers, 2014

Otros cielos, group exhibition, Museo de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, 2014

Le vitrail contemporain de 1945 à nos jours, group exhibition, Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris, 2015

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jean Bouret, « À la découverte de Sergio de Castro », Art Paris, 1951

Pierre Descargues, « Sergio de Castro, 2 visages ? », Les Lettres Françaises, Paris, 1952

Julio E Payro, *Sergio de Castro*, exhibition catalogue of Galeria Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1952

Franck Elgar Carrefour, *Sergio de Castro*, 1954

André Chastel, « Un jeune peintre Sergio de Castro », Le Monde, 1954

Jean Bouret, « Les Constellations de Castro », Franc-Tireur, Paris, 1954

René de Solier, « Sergio de Castro », *Nouvelle Revue Française*, 1956

Cordoba-Iturburu, « Personnalité et raffinement chez Sergio de Castro », El Hogar, Buenos Aires, 1956

Mujica Lainez, « El refinamiento de Sergio de Castro », La Nacion, Buenos Aires, 1956

Denys Sutton, « Sergio de Castro », *Apollo*, London, N°394, December 1957

Denys Sutton, *Sergio de Castro*, Musée de Poche, Edition Fall, 1964

Hans Platte, « Sergio de Castro », exhibition catalogue *Sergio de Castro 1955-1965*, Kunstverein, Hamburg, 1965

Arnold Kohler, « L'univers particulier de Sergio de Castro », *La Tribune de Genève*, 1966

Denys Sutton, « Landscape of Light », exhibition catalogue, *Sergio de Castro, Landscape of light*, Wildenstein Gallery, London, 1972

Claude Esteban, « Cosa mentale », exhibition catalogue, *Sergio de Castro*, Galerie Jacob, Paris, 1972

Guy Weelen, *Ceci regarde la peinture*, exhibition catalogue, Galerie Jacob, Paris, 1974

Antonio Bonet, « Correa Dualidad y Unidad en la obra de Sergio de Castro », *Coloquio* N° 21, Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1975

Gunther Busch, *Rétrospective Sergio de Castro, 1965 – 1975*, exhibition catalogue, Kunsthalle, Bremen, 1975

Hans Platte, « Sergio de Castro », exhibition catalogue, *Sergio de Castro*, Musée de Caen, 1975-76

Various, edited by Michel Laclotte, *Petit Larousse de la Peinture*, 1979

Jean-Marie Dunoyer, « Forme : Permanence et métamorphose du visible », *Le Monde*, 1979

Lydia Harambourg, *L'École de Paris 1945-1965 Dictionnaire des peintres*, Éditions Ides et Calendes, 1983

Georges Borgeaud, « L'œuvre de Sergio de Castro », *Revue Lyra*, N°250/251, Buenos Aires, 1983

Jacques Thuillier, *Les Prophètes*, Editions El Viso, 1984

Etienne Chatton, *Nouveaux signes du sacré*, co-published by Loisirs et Pédagogie, Lausanne, Fragnière, Fribourg, 1986

Denis Laval, « Sergio de Castro à Bayeux », exhibition catalogue *Sergio de Castro, sujets religieux 1948 – 1978*, 1st Festival of Contemporary Sacred Art in Bayeux, 1988

Dora Vallier, « L'œil écoute », exhibition catalogue, *Sergio de Castro, Natures – Mortes 1958- 1965*, Galerie des Ambassades, Paris, 1988

Jean Dominique Rey, « L'atelier du Saint-Gothard », exhibition catalogue *Sergio de Castro, Les Ateliers 1958 – 1969*, Galerie des Ambassades, Paris, 1989

« Entretien de Jean-Dominique Rey avec Sergio de Castro », exhibition catalogue *Sergio de Castro 1972 – 1978*, Hôtel de Ville de Sochaux, 1991

Roger Munier, « TERRE ARDENTE », *Voir Paris*, Deyrolle Éditeur, 1993

Marie-Pierre Colle, « Corcuera Sergio de Castro », *Artistas latino-americanos en sus studios*, Noriega Editores, Mexico, 1994

Jacques Thuillier, *Histoire de l'Art*, Flammarion, 2002

Various, *Sergio de Castro Soixante ans de création 1944-2004*, Somogy Editions and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Saint-Lô, 2006

Lydia Harambourg, « SERGIO DE CASTRO », texts collected under the guidance of J. Thuillier, Somogy Editions, 2006

Various, *Sergio de Castro*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Saint-Lô, 2007

Silvia Listur, *Sergio de Castro*, exhibition catalogue, Museo Gurvich, Montevideo, 2009

Christina Rossi, « Sergio de Castro », *Revue Pagina 12*, Montevideo, 2009

Gianni Burattoni, « De la peinture retrouvée à la peinture transformée », exhibition catalogue *Francine Del Pierre, Sergio de Castro*, Atelier Del Pierre- Franck, Paris, 2010

Michel Hérold, Véronique David (dir.), *Vitrail Ve – XXI^e siècle*, Paris, Centre des Monuments Nationaux, Éditions du Patrimoine, 2014

