

Sicardi |
Ayers
Bacino

Informed Informalism

**Opening Reception: Saturday, September 13 | 6 - 8 p.m.
1506 W. Alabama Street | Through November 22, 2025**



Image Details: Alejandro Otero, *La escoba* [The Broom], 1962. Assemblage, 67 11/16 x 14 15/16 inches.

We are pleased to announce the exhibition ***Informed Informalism: Gramcko, Otero, Pardo, and Sanin*** opens on Saturday, September 13 in our upstairs project room. Join us for a cocktail reception on **Saturday, September 13, from 6 to 8 p.m.**

OPENING RECEPTION AT SICARDI AYERS BACINO

Saturday, September 13 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

EXHIBITION DATES

September 13 - November 22, 2025

The exhibition *Informed Informalism*, features early works by Colombian artist Fanny Sanin, and by Venezuelan artists Elsa Gramcko, Mercedes Pardo and Alejandro Otero. In the voluminous book *Twentieth Century Art of Latin America*, Jacqueline Barnitz states, "Informalismo (informalism), as this type of abstraction was known in Latin America, took two main directions: one that depended on surface elaboration and texture, the other, on gestural brush strokes." In the 1950s and 1960s many Latin American artists—at great political and professional peril—produced works that expanded the limits of abstract art, and recontextualized its focus on materiality, found objects and spontaneity.

Elsa Gramcko (1925-1994) was born in Venezuela. Of German descent, Gramcko was a largely self-taught artist, apart from a few free courses she enrolled in at the Facultad de Humanidades at the UCV in Caracas (1946) and her auditing of a class taught by Alejandro Otero at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas (1955). Gramcko's first works are marked by experimental tendencies and an interest in abstract art, which she later developed into geometric pieces. Throughout the artist's lifetime, her work was exhibited within Latin America, as well as in the United States and Europe. Gramcko participated in the 1959 São Paulo Art Biennial. In 1960 she began to explore texture in her works as well as a darker palette, resulting in works that have been described as lunar landscapes. This interest was further developed using oxidized metals in works that are considered her first experiments with informalism. By 1964 she began to incorporate doors and pieces of wood into her work. That same year she represented Venezuela alongside Jesús Rafael Soto, Luisa Palacios, and others at the XXXII Venice Biennale.

Alejandro Otero (1921–1990) was a Venezuelan painter and sculptor who played a leading role in the history of modernist abstraction in his native land. He was awarded a scholarship to move to Paris and lived there between 1945 and 1952. It was in Paris that he began producing some of his most important bodies of work, including *Las cafeteras* (the coffeepots), painted between 1946 and 1948, a series that marked his transition from figuration to abstraction. The canvases of this series were exhibited at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas in 1949, an event that paved the way for the emergence of geometric abstraction in Venezuela. Upon his return to Paris in 1950, Otero founded the group *Los Disidentes* along with other young Venezuelan expatriate painters interested in abstraction. In 1955, Otero began to produce the *Colorhythms*, a series of modular paintings of Duco, an industrial lacquer, sprayed onto wood panels with white and dark parallel bands and vibrating forms of brilliant colors. Otero moved to Paris a second time in 1960 and lived there until 1964. His works underwent changes, and he experimented with collage, assemblage, and *objets trouvés*.

Mercedes Pardo (1921–2005) was one of the most important representatives of abstract art in Venezuela. Her work revolved mainly around painting but also extended to stained glass, enamel on metal, and graphics. In 1949, she was awarded a fellowship that allowed her to travel to Paris and enroll at the École du Louvre. During this period, she began producing collages and her first abstract works. In 1952, she returned to Venezuela and participated in the International Exhibition of Abstract Art. Abstractionism began to be recognized in Venezuela during the 1950s, and a climate of renewal for both artistic production and education was supported by the Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV). Around 1956, Pardo began producing pieces that could be categorized as pre-informalist given their use of a rich pictorial layer. In 1960, she moved to Paris for a second time, where she painted abstract watercolors characterized by their lyrical brushstrokes, drips, and blotches that created a highly dynamic artistic space.

Fanny Sanin (b. 1938) has lived in New York since 1971, but she was born in Colombia in 1938 and studied art at the Universidad de los Andes. Throughout her long and illustrious artistic career Sanin has worked in two types of abstraction: the informalist one with which she started in Colombia in the 1960s and continued during her stay in Mexico; and geometric abstraction, that she mostly developed in New York, and which was mediated by her London sojourn (1966-1969). Her metamorphosis is often credited to a specific event: the *Art of the Real USA 1948-1968* exhibit, curated by the Museum of Modern Art of New York, that Sanin saw in Paris in 1968. It featured artists like Clyfford Still, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko, who might have been congruent with her own *modus operandi* at the time; and others, such as Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, and Kenneth Noland, whose works led her towards Geometric Abstraction.

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