

ALVARO BARRIOS



NOHRA HAIME GALLERY

COVER: 1. UNTITLED (A Wedding Present), 2008
acrylic on canvas
59 x 59 in. 150 x 150 cm.

ALVARO BARRIOS

DREAMS ABOUT MARCEL DUCHAMP

November 18 - December 24, 2008

TEXT BY ANA SOKOLOFF

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Alvaro Barrios: The Curious Voyeur

Alvaro Barrios' exploration in the realm of art history by means of the cartoon creates a flow of events that frame a very particular universe where art and life blend into an inquisitive utopia of their own. The artist intends to redefine the most common understanding of art and life, of Low and High culture. In Barrios' own world the wars between high and low succumb to the faith of the wheel of fortune, fluctuating up and down, between good and bad, and substituting each other. Adhering himself to the powers of the alchemist and to the supremacy of substitution, Barrios delivers a humorous, critical and celebratory view of the world of Art.

Intervening and manipulating the various explorations of Tintin, the utmost inquisitive reporter in the 20th Century; Clark Kent, the social activist that fought as Superman against crooked businessmen and politicians; and Dick Tracy, the detective who battled against the most evil of villains, Barrios initiates a series of enticing scenarios that refer to some of the most notable ruptures within the context of art history and representation.

These memorable interventions seen through the eyes of Barrios yet impersonated by super heroes, generate upon the spectator a new kind of truth. A new way of approaching art and life inspired in Duchamp's writings where the authorship, the intention, and the art object are questioned as such and reframed into signs or acts of criticism in action. Thus Barrios demystifies the iconic value of certain artistic objects, such as the Fountain by Duchamp, rendering them into the subject of discussion within the cartoon. What is most important however, is that Barrios does not return these objects to their original state of commonplace items; he actually respects their status of ready-mades or art objects. By introducing them within the narrative of the strip and making them the theme of the adventure, he redefines their value in a new social order—the cartoon.

The cartoon strip—a symbol of popular culture, served as inspiration in the creation of High art. Its formal characteristics: the figures, the line, the bold colors, and text within the framed strip motivated the endless possibilities of synthesis in representation typical of this movement. For example, Roy Lichtenstein magnified the dot and reframed the narrative to his wish, while Andy Warhol copied the whole image, like in the Coca Cola bottles, but rendered it in series and in different supports altering its original purpose and meaning. "Pop's concern with subject and attitude represents mass-produced images and objects by using a style, which is also based upon the visual vocabulary of mass production. The real Pop artist not only likes the fact of his commonplace objects, but more important, exults in their commonplace look, which is no longer viewed through the blurred, kaleidoscopic lenses of abstract expressionism." *

Barrios on the other hand, goes beyond the style. He respects all the conceptual and formal characteristics of the cartoon and embeds it with a new narrative altogether. The cartoon never loses its quality of acting as a symbol of popular culture and as a source of information. In keeping with these qualities, Barrios uses the strip as the support and without sacrificing its formal characteristics, its purpose of entertainment, or its power of circulation it becomes the means whereupon Barrios expresses his insubordinate ideas about art and representation.

The allure that cartoons exude on the spectator is a quality that Barrios uses to his advantage today in order to insert the art object in the various means of distribution. This began fortuitously in 1972 with the "grabados populares" which were drawings that were published and circulated in different newspapers. Barrios would announce their publication along with a meeting date and place for him to encounter "the collector" and sign the work. The power of dissemination that the newspaper had as well as the counterculture aspect of distributing art works through mass media and the low cost of production were some of the aspects that seduced Barrios in following this and other experiments through the years.

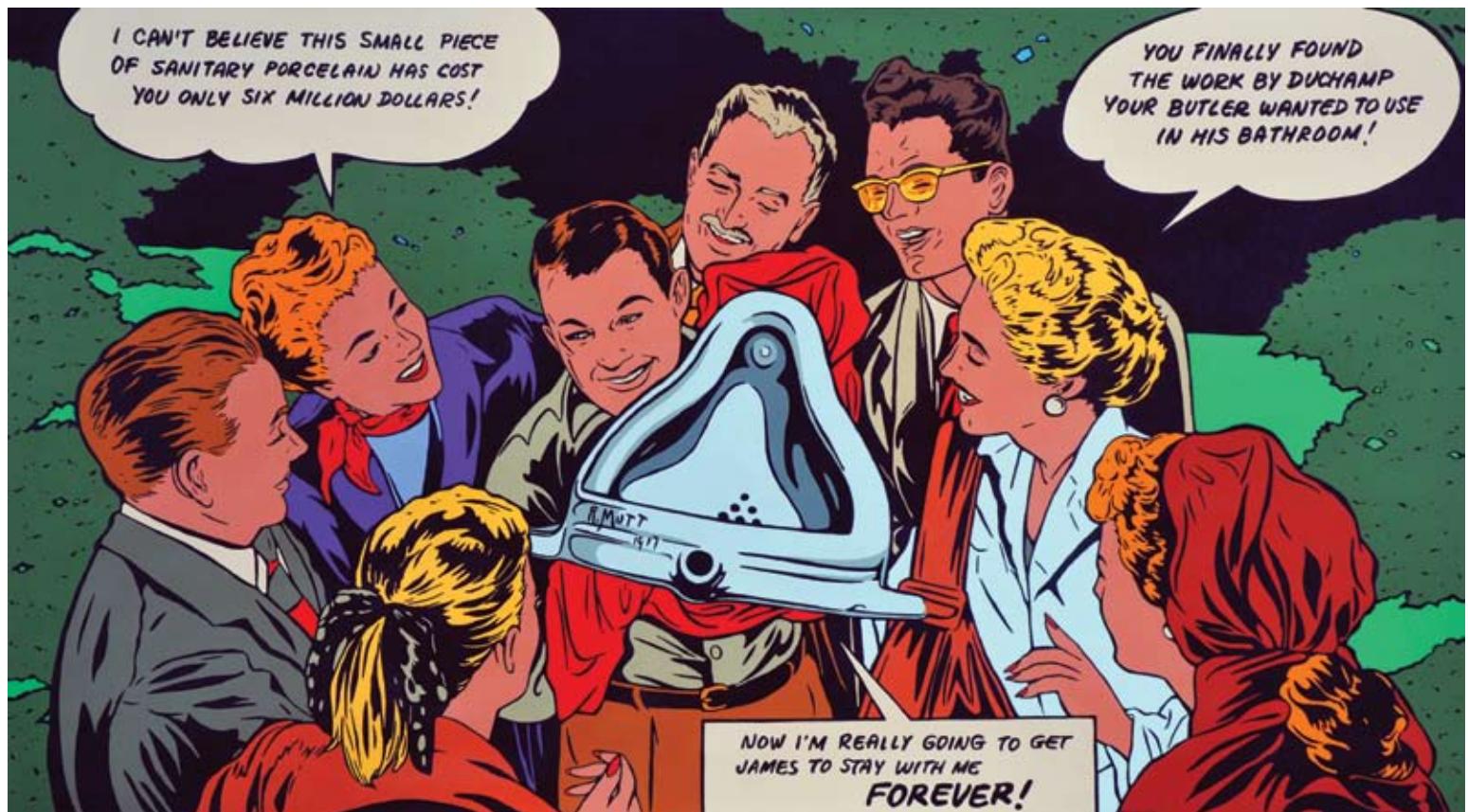
Encouraged by the "grabados populares," Barrios began exploring the idea of the copy, the multiple, its forms of distribution, and the value ascribed by the market in general and the art market in particular. Again Duchamp played a key role in this new endeavor. The Fountain, first exhibited in New York in 1917, obtained its mythical status from the intellectual and cultural context that surrounded its scandalous reception as an art object. From there on, every version (each a copy without an original and a multiple) has been equally enhanced by context. Today, it continues to be a controversial work of art that stirs endless discussions about beauty, authorship, intention, substitution and value. Barrios has enriched his own creative process by allowing these core issues to seep into his work. The cartoons openly discuss the admiration for Duchamp's work, the value of art and artists, common misconceptions about art and art history, and other themes that underline the power of art in the world today. With the cartoons, Barrios wittingly redefines the significance of beauty, content and form both in 20th Century art history and in his own production. He exudes, like Duchamp, the joy in Arroser la vie.

* (Robert Roseblum. Pop Art and Non Pop Art, Art and Literature, No. 5, Summer 1964.)

Ana Sokoloff



2. UNTITLED (Looking For An Utrillo Which Looks Like A Mondrian), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 39 1/2 x 70 3/4 in. 100 x 180 cm.



3. UNTITLED (This Small Piece Of Sanitary Porcelain), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 39 1/4 x 70 3/4 in. 100 x 180 cm.



4. UNTITLED (How Lucky We Are To Have Found This Window), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 51 1/4 x 98 1/2 in. 130 x 250 cm.



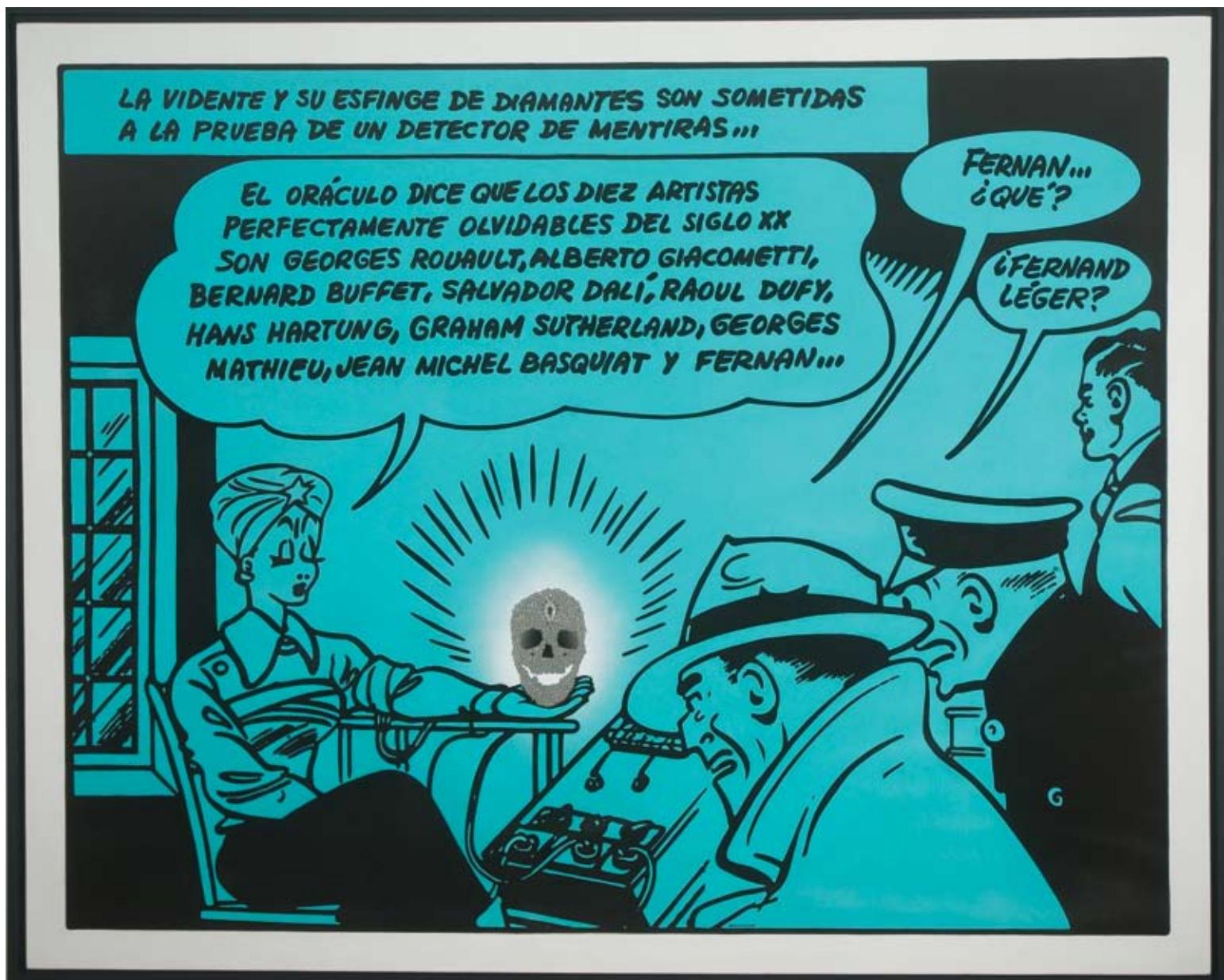
5. UNTITLED (Can You Believe This?), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 39 1/4 x 70 3/4 in. 100 x 180 cm.



6. UNTITLED (This Work Is Already A Part Of My Life), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 59 x 59 in. 150 x 150 cm.



7. UNTITLED (How Long Runnin' Away With This Junk?), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 51 1/4 x 98 1/2 in. 130 x 250 cm.



8. UNTITLED (Los Diez Artistas Perfectamente Olvidables)
(The Ten Perfectly Forgettable Artists), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 63 x 78 3/4 in. 160 x 200 cm.



9. UNTITLED (You Will Give Us The "Large Glass" Whether You Want To Or Not, Superman!), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 39 1/2 x 70 3/4 in. 100 x 180 cm.



10. FIVE READYMADES (Fountain), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 30 in. diam. 76 cm.



11. FIVE READYMADES (*In Advance Of The Broken Arm*), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 39 3/8 x 70 3/4 in. 100 x 180 cm.



12. FIVE READYMADES (Bottlerack), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 30 in. diam. 76 cm.



13. FIVE READYMADES (Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 39 3/8 x 70 3/4 in. 100 x 180 cm.



14. UNTITLED (Que Buena Suerte Haber Encontrado Esta Ventana)
(How Lucky We Are To Have Found This Window), 2008, ink and watercolor on paper, 133/8 x 251/4 in. 34 x 64 cm.



15. UNTITLED (Nos Entregaras el Gran Vidrio Quieras o no Quieras, Superman!)
(You Will Give Us The "Large Glass" Whether You Want To Or Not, Superman!), 2008, ink and watercolor on paper, 145/8 x 27½ in. 37 x 70 cm.



16. UNTITLED (En la Cena de Anoche Dolores del Río Aseguró...)
(Last Night, During Dinner, Dolores Del Rio Affirmed...), 2006, ink and watercolor on paper, 10 5/8 x 19 in. 27 x 48 cm.



17. UNTITLED (Que Maravilla Haber Comprado Este Cuadro de Tom Wesselmann)
(What A Marvel To Have Bought This Painting By Tom Wesselmann), 2006, ink and watercolor on paper, 10 7/8 x 17 1/4 in. 27.5 x 44 cm.



18. UNTITLED (Estos Recuerdos de Tu Fiesta de Cumpleanos)
(These Souvenirs From Your Birthday Party), 2008, ink and watercolor on paper, 10 1/4 x 12 3/8 in. 26 x 31.5 cm.

ALVARO BARRIOS

Born in Cartagena, Colombia, 1945

Lives in Italy, 1966-67

Moves to Barranquilla, Colombia, 1968

EDUCATION

Universidad del Atlántico, Barranquilla, Colombia

Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy

Fondazione Giorgio Cini di Venezia, Venice, Italy

LECTURE

2008 The Museum of Modern Art, "Modern Poets". Lecture of "Dreams About Marcel Duchamp." New York, NY.

AWARDS

2001 I Bienal de Buenos Aires, "Premio Latinoamericano de Pintura y Técnicas Mixtas," Buenos Aires, Argentina

1985 Jose María Córdoba Airport, Medellín, Colombia

1979 First Prize, I Trienal Latinoamericana de Grabado, Buenos Aires, Argentina

1974 Gold Medal, Tokyo Biennial, Tokyo, Japan

1969 Third Prize, XX Salón de Artistas Colombianos, Bogotá, Colombia

1966 Second Prize, Concurso Dante Alighieri, Bogotá, Colombia

ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2008 Nohra Haime Gallery, "Dreams About Marcel Duchamp," New York, NY

2006 Museo Nacional, "Alvaro Barrios: Grabados populares," Bogotá, Colombia Galería Mundo, Bogotá, Colombia

2004 Galería Jenny Vila, Cali, Colombia

1998 Museo Nacional de la Estampa, "Obra Gráfica de Alvaro Barrios." México, México.

1992 Expo-Sevilla 92, "Arte Colombiano Contemporáneo," Seville, Spain Galería Alfred Wild, Bogotá, Colombia

1990 Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia Museo Bolivariano de Arte Contemporáneo, Santa Marta, Colombia

1989 Galería Alfred Wild, Bogota, Colombia Galería Elida Lara, Barranquilla, Colombia

1988 Sala Mendoza, Caracas, Venezuela

1987 Museo de Arte Moderno, "Retrospective: Obra Gráfica," Cartagena, Colombia Galerie Salammbo, Paris, France

1986 Museo de Arte Moderno, "Retrospective," Bogotá, Colombia

1981 Sala Cultural Avianca, "Retrospective," Barranquilla, Colombia

1980 Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia Galería Nueve, Lima, Perú

1979 Galería La Oficina, Medellín, Colombia

1977 Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá, Colombia

1969 Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia

1968 Galería Marta Traba, Bogotá, Colombia

1967 Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá, Colombia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007 The Museum of Modern Art, "New Perspectives in Latin American Art 1930 – 2006: Selections from a decade of acquisitions", New York.

Museo de Antioquia, "Orígenes del Arte Conceptual en Colombia," Medellín, Colombia

"Arte contemporáneo del Caribe colombiano," traveling exhibition

"Dibujos colombianos del siglo XX," Galería El Cometa, Bogotá, Colombia

2006 "Para recordar la ciudad solar," Banco de la República, Cali, Colombia

2005 Museo de Arte Moderno, "Centenario del Centro Artístico de Barranquilla," Barranquilla, Colombia

San Juan Poly/Graphic Triennial: "Trans/Migrations: Graphics as Contemporary Art," San Juan, Puerto Rico

2004 El Museo del Barrio, "MoMA at El Museo: Latin American and Caribbean Art from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art." New York.

2002 Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes "Los Cincuenta Caminos de la Vida." , Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Arborizar, Bogota, Colombia

2001	Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, "I Bienal de Buenos Aires." Buenos Aires, Argentina Museo de Arte de Jamaica, "Arte Colombiano del Caribe Colombiano," Kingston, Jamaica Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, "Los Cincuenta Caminos de la Vida," Buenos Aires, Argentina
2000	Centro de Artes Visuales, "Los Cincuenta Caminos de la Vida." Lima, Perú Casa de las Américas, "Arte Contemporáneo del Caribe Colombiano," Havana, Cuba Museo de Arte Contemporáneo del Zulia, Maracaibo, Venezuela
1999	Culturgest Center, "America Latina: Las Vanguardias al Final del Milenio," Lisbon, Portugal Christie's Auction on behalf of Lima's Contemporary Art Museum, Lima, Perú Museo de Arte Moderno, "Capítulos Ilustrados de El Quijote," Bucaramanga, Colombia Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, "Arte y Violencia en Colombia desde 1948," Bogotá, Colombia Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, "El Paisaje Interpretado," Bogotá, Colombia The Museum of Natural History, "Cuerpos Pintados," New York, NY Museo de Arte Contemporáneo El Minuto de Dios, "El Pesebre," Bogotá, Colombia
1998	Museo Nacional de la Estampa, "Obra Gráfica de Alvaro Barrios," Mexico City, Mexico Galería Santa Fé, Planetario Distrital, "Premio Luis Caballero," Bogotá, Colombia
1997	Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, "Obra Gráfica de Alvaro Barrios," Bogota, Colombia Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, "Do It - Hagalo Usted," Bogota, Colombia Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, "Los Cincuenta Caminos de la Vida," Cali, Colombia Museo de Arte de Pereira, Pereira, Colombia, Museo de Arte Moderno de Cartagena, Cartagena, Colombia Museo de Arte Moderno de Barranquilla, Barranquilla, Colombia
1996	Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, "America Latina 96," Buenos Aires, Argentina Galería Garcés Velásquez, "Los Cincuenta Caminos de la Vida," Bogotá, Colombia
1995	Suramericana de Seguros, "Los Cincuenta Caminos de la Vida," Medellín, Colombia
1994	XXXVI Salón de Artistas Colombianos, Bogota, Colombia Galeria El Museo, "Juguete," Bogota, Colombia
1993	XXXV Salón de Artistas Colombianos, Bogotá, Colombia
1992	Pabellón de las Artes, Expo Sevilla 92, "Arte Colombiano Contemporáneo," Seville, Spain
1991	San Diego Museum of Arts, "Latin American Drawing Today," San Diego, CA
1990	Fuji Art Museum, "Colombian Contemporary Art," Tokyo, Japan Museo de Bellas Artes, "Figuracion, Fabulacion: 75 años de pintura en Latinoamerica," Caracas, Venezuela
1988	San Diego Museum of Art, "Wall to Wall De Pared a Pared - Latin American Drawings Today." San Diego, CA Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, II Bienal Latinoamericana de Artes Gráficas, New York
1986	Mall Gallery, "Colombian Contemporary Art," London; Palais de Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium II Bienal de La Habana, Cuba. "Cien Años de Arte Colombiano." Palacio Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
1985	"Cien Años de Arte Colombiano." Instituto Italo-Latinoamericano, Roma, Italia Museo de Arte Moderno, "Cien Años de Arte Colombiano," Bogota, Colombia Centro Cultural Paulista, Sao Paulo, Brasil Centro Cultural Avianca, Barranquilla, Colombia Norwegian International Print Biennial, Oslo, Norway
1984	I Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
1983	Ecole des Beaux Arts, "Arte del Taller, Arte de la Calle," Paris, France Franklin Furnace Archives, "Multiples by Latin American Artists." New York, NY
1982	Daad Galerie, "Kunster aus Lateinamerika, Berlin, Germany
1981	IV Bienal de Grabado de San Juan, San Juan, Puerto Rico
1979	Trienal Latinoamericana de Grabado, Buenos Aires, Argentina
1977	Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, "Los Novísimos Colombianos," Caracas, Venezuela
1976	Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, III Bienal Americana de Artes Gráficas, Cali, Colombia University of Texas Art Museum, "Colombian Figurative Graphics," Austin, TX
1975	Museo de Arte Moderno, "Paisaje 1900-1975," Bogotá, Colombia Sao Paulo Bienal, Sao Paulo, Brazil
1974	International Culturel Centrum, "Art Systems in Latin America," Anvers, Belgium Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussel, Belgium "Latin American in Zagreb," Zagreb, Croatia
1972	Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, "Arte de Colombia en Caracas," Caracas, Venezuela Museo Emilio Caraffa, "Hacia un Perfil de Arte Latinoamericano," Cordoba, Argentina
1971	Galería Amadis, Madrid, Spain VII Biennale de Paris. Paris, France.
1970	II Bienal de Coltejer, Medellín, Colombia

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
The Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, NY
The New York Public Library, New York, NY
Museum of Modern Art of Latin America, Washington, DC
Museo Nacional de la Estampa, Mexico City, Mexico
Centro Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba
Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo, Lima, Peru
National Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
Museo de Arte Moderno, La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia
Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá, Colombia
Museo de Arte Moderno, Medellín, Colombia
Museo de Arte Moderno, Pereira, Colombia
Museo de Arte Moderno, Cartagena, Colombia
Museo de Arte Moderno, Bucaramanga, Colombia
Museo de Arte Moderno, Barranquilla, Colombia
Museo Bolivariano de Arte Contemporáneo, Santa Marta, Colombia
Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional, Bogota, Colombia
Museo Nacional, Bogota, Colombia
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo El Minuto de Dios, Bogotá, Colombia
Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá, Colombia

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"Álvaro Barrios: Grabados populares," Boletín Electrónico del Museo Nacional, November 22, 2006.
"Álvaro Barrios: MOMA," ArtNexus, No. 58, November 2005, illustrated.
"Álvaro Barrios realiza una visita guiada a la exhibición 'orígenes del arte conceptual en Colombia' en el Museo de Antioquia," Encuentro Internacional Medellín
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Colombia Diversa, September 25, 2007, illustrated, <http://www.colombiadiversa.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=397>
"Colombian Figurative Graphics," Archer M. Huntington Galleries, University Art Museum, February 1 – March 28, 1976, The University of Texas at Austin, exhibition catalogue, illustrated.
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- Pintura y Escultura de los años 30, Museo De Arte Moderno, La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia, exhibition catalogue.
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- Tercera Bienal de Arte Coltejer, Medellín, Colombia, 1973, exhibition catalogue, illustrated.
- Toledo, Fernando. "Alvaro Barrios en el MOMA: Memoria, Humor e Intimidad," Número 55, Sunday, October 13, 2008,
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- Uribe de Urdinola, Maritza, 4 Bienal Americana De Artes Graficas, Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia, 1981, exhibition catalogue, illustrated.
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BACK COVER: 19. FIVE READYMADES (With Hidden Noise), 2008
acrylic on canvas
30 in. diam. 76 cm.



NOHRA HAIME GALLERY

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NEW YORK, NY 10022

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