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Leon Tovar Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Carmelo Arden Quin: Invention* on 26 April, 2018, from 6–8pm, at our 25th Street location. Featuring a selection of work spanning nearly seventy years of fruitful practice, the exhibition brings together representative examples of the Uruguayan’s distinctive forms: nonorthogonal canvases; mobiles; articulated sculptures; “white forms”; coplanals; and *galbées*. Each of these categories, in their own way, offers a pointed rebuke to the spectator’s traditional relationship to painting and sculpture by conjuring movement and instability—both real and perceived. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue featuring an essay by María Cristina Rossi, art historian and Professor of Latin American Art at the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero and the Universidad de Buenos Aires.

“INVENTION,” Arden Quin proclaimed in the pages of *Revista Arturo* (1944), “[o]f any thing, any action, form, myth, for simple fun, for the simple feeling of creation: everlasting FUNCTION.”<sup>1</sup> His pursuit of “invention”—which he understood as “pure creation” devoid of expressive impulses, as well as a descriptive term for a new art reflective of social and economic realities—led to decades of aesthetic experimentation. In 1946 he cofounded the Buenos Aires-based MADI group, alongside Gyula Kosice, Rhod Rothfuss, and Martin Blaszko, who called for paintings of irregular shape, paintings with moveable components (coplanals), and mutable sculptures. Regarding these experiments, Arden Quin stated that “what distinguishes us, what makes us original, is the use of irregular polygons as a dimension to inscribe a composition. In abandoning the four classical orthogonal angles (square and rectangle) as a basis for composition, we gained in possibilities for invention, in every sense of the word. We can create an infinite number of flat forms...”<sup>2</sup> By beginning from an irregular shape, and through facilitating direct interaction with the work of art, Arden Quin and his colleagues reserved a place for potential and creation.

The work on view includes historical examples of Arden Quin’s practice executed either side of his 1948 move to Paris, including the 1938 canvas *Cubista*, created well before the development of the artist’s now-recognizable formal language. After relocating to the French capital, Arden Quin continued promoting MADI aesthetics and met the artists Michel Seuphor, Francis Picabia, and Georges Vantongerloo. The latter was an important touchstone in the development of Arden Quin’s “white forms,” which retain the MADI emphasis on irregularly shaped planes and movable components, but are carried out in a restrained, polished monochrome. The show also features a large selection of the artist’s collages of the ’50s, and several *galbées*, to which Arden Quin returned in the ’70s—their rolling surfaces, undulating smoothly from concave to convex, covered by dense patterns. The exhibition concludes with the artist’s later work dating from the ’90s until after the turn of the century, incorporating plastic and metal, but still indebted to the irregular polygon, the mobile, and the ludic.



Roã, 1950  
Lacquer on sanded wood  
12.01 x 15.35 in.  
(30.5 x 39 cm)

**CARMELO ARDEN QUIN** [1913–2010] was born in Rivera, Uruguay. After attending a 1935 lecture in Montevideo delivered by Joaquin Torres-García, Arden Quin began meeting regularly with the older artist—an association that was foundational to his trajectory. In 1944, Arden Quin produced the first and only issue of *Revista Arturo*, where he published the essay “Invención.” His collaborators included Gyula Kosice, Edgar Bayley, Rhod Rothfuss, Vicente Huidobro, and Torres-García. After the splintering of the Arturo artists, Arden Quin, alongside Kosice, Rothfuss, and Martín Blaszko, formed the MADI group in 1946. The group issued its manifesto and exhibited before separating into two factions (Arden Quin and Blaszko; Kosice and Rothfuss). Arden Quin moved to France in 1948 where he exhibited in numerous iterations of the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, and showed in the 1951 *Espace-Lumière* exhibition at Galerie Suzanne Michel, alongside Jack Youngerman, Ellsworth Kelly, Alejandro Otero, and Jesús Rafael Soto. His work has been featured in numerous exhibitions worldwide, including *La Escuela del Sur: El Taller Torres García y su legado* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid); *Artistas latinoamericanos del siglo XX* (Estación Plaza de Armas, Seville); Centre Pompidou, Paris; Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, Cologne; Museum of Modern Art, New York; *Arte Madi* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid); *Abstract Art from the Rio de La Plata* (The Americas Society, New York); and *The Geometry of Hope* (Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Grey Art Gallery, New York University).

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<sup>1</sup> Carmelo Arden Quin, “Invención,” *Arturo I*, no. 1 (1944). Reproduced in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, exh. cat. (Houston, TX: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2004), 491–492.

<sup>2</sup> Claudia Laudanno, “Carmelo Arden Quin: Aestheticism and Asceticism of a Madi,” *Art en Colombia* 93; *ArtNexus* 47 (2003), 60–65. This text is reproduced in *Geometric Abstraction in Latin America: Anthological Texts Arte en Colombia/ArtNexus* (Bogotá: ArtNexus, 2013), 69–70.