

# Room 9

## Folk Pop

This room looks at the relationship between pop and folk art. These apparent opposites – the mass-produced versus the local and homespun – in fact share an interest in everyday visual culture supposedly separate from 'high art'.

Beatriz González brings handicraft, mass-production and canonical art history together in **The Last Table**, a simplified rendering of Leonardo da Vinci's **Last Supper** on a wood-effect table. Similarly, Parviz Tanavoli marries Iranian folk motifs and techniques with the bright colours of commercial products. Folk-pop works often blur the line between artwork and functional object, from González's table to Tanavoli's carpet. Raúl Martínez adopts a naïve folk-painting style in his repeating grid of Fidel Castro in what might be seen as a riposte to Andy Warhol's screen-printed portraits based on celebrity publicity stills.

## Wall labels

Clockwise from right of wall text

Judy Chicago 1939

Born and works USA

**Flight Hood**

**Bigamy Hood**

**Birth Hood**

1965/2011

Sprayed automotive lacquer on car hood

Chicago painted these works using techniques she learnt at an auto-body school in Los Angeles, the only woman in a class of 250. She applied sexual imagery evoking both male and female forms to the conventionally 'macho' object of the car bonnet. The motifs were developed earlier, at art college, where they were met with outrage: 'These paintings horrified my painting instructors: "wombs and breasts" they exclaimed, as if those body part references were the manifestation of something hideous.' These works can be seen to address the challenges that Chicago encountered in the male-dominated environments both of the art world and the custom car shop.

Courtesy Judy Chicago / Riflemaker London.  
X55196, X53181, X53184



Beatriz González 1938  
Born and works Colombia  
**The Suicides of Sisga I–III**  
**Los suicidas del Sisga I–III**  
1965  
Oil paint on canvas

González' work developed during a period of social and political upheaval known as La Violencia (the violence), which influenced her understanding of Colombian society. These works are based on a photograph, widely reproduced in the national newspapers, left behind by two lovers who drowned themselves in the Sisga dam. The couple, motivated by deep religious beliefs, decided to end their lives to liberate the woman from sin and preserve both from evil. González, fascinated and moved by the story, borrowed the image to denounce the violent facet of Colombian identity, while critiquing its use by the media.

Collection of Diane and Bruce Halle. X53237  
Museo La Tertulia. X52188  
Colección Museo Nacional de Colombia. X52189

Beatriz González 1938

Born and works Colombia

**The Last Table**

**La última mesa**

1970

Enamel on metal plate mounted within metal furniture

González stood out from her contemporaries as one of the first artists in Colombia to draw inspiration from the mass media, creating dialogue between popular narratives and formal painting. In the early 1970s she began to incorporate mass-produced items in her work. In **The Last Table** she combines an ordinary faux-wood table with a reinterpretation of Leonardo da Vinci's **Last Supper**. This image circulated widely as a cheap black and white reproduction and was often used as a good luck charm. Here it serves as a symbol of Colombia's Eurocentric gaze.

Tate Collection. Presented by the American Fund for the Tate Gallery, courtesy of the Latin American Acquisitions Committee 2013. T14223



Marisol 1930

Born and works USA

**My Mum and I**

**Mi Mama y Yo**

1968

Painted bronze and aluminium

Having grown up between France and her parents' native Venezuela, Marisol's immersion in the New York pop art scene inspired her to experiment with mediated imagery and unconventional materials. At the same time she maintained an interest in portraiture and was inspired by pre-Colombian cultures. This work alludes to her mother's death, when Marisol was eleven. The sculpture includes evocative fragments from her heritage, like the typically Latin American cast hat worn by the mother figure.

Collection of the artist. X53634



Raúl Martínez 1927–1995

Born and worked Cuba

**Listen America**

**Oye América**

c.1967

Oil paint on canvas

Following the revolution of 1959 Raúl Martínez emerged as one of Cuba's leading artists. Originally an abstract painter, he renounced this style in favour of a more direct visual language, informed by graphic design and the murals and graffiti that appeared across the island to celebrate the revolution. Here he immortalises Cuba's leader Fidel Castro delivering a speech addressed to America, transmitting Cuba's revolutionary message. Martínez's naïve painterly style connects the work to local folk tradition, while the repeating grid refers to modernist abstraction, perhaps also proposing an alternative to Western pop portraiture.

Colección Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Cuba. X57181

Parviz Tanavoli 1937

Born Iran, works Iran and Canada

### **The Poet and the Beloved of the King**

1964–6

Wood, tin-plate, copper, steel, fluorescent light,  
Perspex and oil paint

Motifs taken from Iranian religious folk art recur in Tanavoli's work, especially the saqqakhaneh, a votive fountain protected by metal grills. Here he reappropriates the evocative grill element, extracted from its original function and applied to robot-like figures made out of brightly coloured, pop-inspired materials.

Tate Collection. Purchased with funds provided by Edward and Maryam Eisler 2012. T13684



Parviz Tanavoli 1937

Born Iran, works Iran and Canada

### **Nightingale**

1974

Screenprint on paper

Tate Collection. Presented by the artist 2012. P13232

Parviz Tanavoli 1937

Born Iran, works Iran and Canada

**Poet and Nightingale**

1974

Screenprint on paper

Tate Collection. Purchased with funds provided by the  
Middle East North Africa Acquisitions Committee 2012.  
P80177

Parviz Tanavoli 1937

Born Iran, works Iran and Canada

**Poet Squeezing Lemon**

1974

Screenprint on paper

Tate Collection. Purchased with funds provided by the  
Middle East North Africa Acquisitions Committee 2012.  
P80176

Parviz Tanavoli 1937

Born Iran, works Iran and Canada

**Poet and Bird**

1974

Screenprint on paper

Tate Collection Purchased with funds provided by the Middle East North Africa Acquisitions Committee 2012. P80175

Parviz Tanavoli 1937

Born Iran, works Iran and Canada

**Three Lovers**

1974

Screenprint on paper

Tate Collection. Purchased with funds provided by the Middle EastNorth Africa Acquisitions Committee 2012. P80174

Parviz Tanavoli 1937

Born Iran, works Iran and Canada

**Disciples of Sheikh San'an**

1975

Wool

Tanavoli, a pioneering figure in contemporary Iranian art, incorporated traditional techniques and subjects within a resolutely modern visual language. As well as scenes from Persian love poetry, he also reinterpreted icons found in Shiite folk art, such as the cage, the lion, the lock and the bird, using geometric forms. While he was studying art in Tehran in the mid-1950s, the Iranian government's cultural policy was opening to Western practices, at the same time as encouraging the development of national and traditional arts. In the 1960s he played a leading role in the Iranian avant-garde movement, the Saqqakhaneh School, which drew on popular culture.

Tate Collection. Purchased with funds provided by the Middle East North Africa Acquisitions Committee 2012.

T13690