

145 YEARS

STORIES OF A COLLECTION

This exhibition is a collective effort by the team at the National Museum of Fine Arts. Through a careful review of documents and artworks, it reconstructs the diverse stories that have shaped the museum's collection over its 145-year history. Spanning both wings of the second floor and featuring more than 300 works, the exhibition invites visitors on a journey that begins with pieces acquired, donated, or otherwise incorporated from the museum's founding in 1880 to the present day.

Featuring a selection of works by both national and international artists, the exhibition unfolds chronologically, based on the dates the works entered the collection. This selection reflects the role assumed early on by the State as a cultural collector—even before the creation of a dedicated fine arts institution. It also highlights the political and public infrastructure—including administrators, legislators, entrepreneurs, artists, collectors, diplomats, and others—that has enabled the acquisition and inclusion of specific works and artistic contributions. In addition, the exhibition explores the broader contexts that have shaped institutional policies and influenced the development of the collection, aiming to shed light on the rich and complex universe housed within the MNBA.

Organized along two main axes, from north to south, the exhibition allows visitors to appreciate, on the one hand, the heterogeneous nature of the collection, and on the other, to trace the milestones and historical contexts in which various directors and administrations carried out their work—thereby inscribing perspectives that open up multiple interpretations of art history. These sections also help us understand how the Museum has been both a witness to and a protagonist in the country's social, political, and aesthetic transformations.

Complementing this curatorial review is the exhibition *Roberto Matta: Opening the Gaze*, presented as a connecting point between different moments in the collection's evolution. It also recognizes the importance of Matta as a key figure within this cultural heritage. Ultimately, the exhibition seeks to foster a dialogue between art and society, and to reflect on the vital role cultural institutions play in the construction of identities—as well as in ensuring public access to heritage, understood as an ever-evolving process.