

BELKIS AYÓN

Belkis Ayón is one of the most important printmakers to emerge from late twentieth-century Cuba.

Born in Havana in 1967, she developed a singular body of monumental collographs that transformed the myths, symbols, and narrative tensions of the Abakuá fraternity into a powerful visual language of silence, sacrifice, gender, and social exclusion.

Working between the late 1980s and 1999, Ayón pushed collography to an uncommon scale and technical complexity, building images of haunting white figures, dense black fields, and intricate textured surfaces. Since her death, her stature has continued to rise through major retrospective and collection activity, including the traveling Nkame exhibition in the United States, the Reina Sofía retrospective in Madrid, the 2024 presentations at David Castillo and Modern Art Oxford, and recent museum acquisitions and displays at the National Gallery of Art, MoMA, Tate Modern, and MOAD Miami.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 Belkis Ayón: Sikán Illuminations, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
- 2022 Ya Estamos Aquí, Ludwig Forum Aachen, Aachen, Germany
- 2021 Belkis Ayón: Collographs, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
- 2018 Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO
 Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón, Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, TX
 Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ
- 2017 Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón, El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY
- 2016 Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón, Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
- 1999 Rites: Photographies de René Peña / Collographies de Belkis Ayón, Bourbon-Lally Gallery, Pétionville, Haiti
- 1998 Belkis Ayón & Ángel Ramírez, The New Wave of Cuban Art II, gan Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
 Belkis Ayón / Elsa Mora: Recent Work, Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York, NY
 Desasosiego / Restlessness, Couturier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1997 Grand Pas de Trois, Sixth Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
 Ángel Ramírez & Belkis Ayón, The New Wave of Cuban Art I, gan Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 1996 Two Contemporary Cuban Artists: Belkis Ayón and Nelson Domínguez, Hofstra Museum, Hempstead, NY
 Belkis Ayón, Cuban Artist, Bourbon-Lally Gallery, Pétionville, Haiti
- 1995 Unterstütze mich, halte mich hoch im Schmerz, St. Barbara Church / Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany
 Siempre vuelvo, Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Cienfuegos, Cuba
- 1994 Siempre vuelvo, Colorniero Gallery, Milan, Italy
 Belkis Ayón and Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal, Cheiros Gallery, Venice, Italy
- 1993 Siempre vuelvo: Grabados de Belkis Ayón, Centro Provincial de Artes Plásticas y Diseño, Havana, Cuba
 Evidencias de vindicación, Centro de Arte 23 y 12, Havana, Cuba
- 1992 Grabados, SAW Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
 Contemporary Cuban Art: Belkis Ayón and Eduardo Yáñez, L'Annonciation, Quebec, Canada
- 1991 Recuerdo sagrado, Centro de Arte Alamar / Centro de Arte de Guantánamo, Cuba
- 1990 Sikán Kien, la poderosa y sabia, Galería III Congreso, Ranchuelo, Villa Clara, Cuba
 Sikán Kien, Galería de Arte Leopoldo Romañach, Caibarién, Villa Clara, Cuba
- 1988-1989 Propuesta a los veinte años, Galería Servando Cabrera Moreno, Havana, Cuba

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Belkis Ayón and Carlos Alfonzo: Odyssey, Museum of Art and Design at MDC, Miami, FL
- 2025 Diary of Flowers: Artists and their Worlds, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
After the End, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France
- 2024 Vital Signs: Artists and the Body, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
In the Studio, Tate Modern, London, UK
Fragments of Epic Memory, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH
On the Volcano, Ludwig Forum Aachen, Aachen, Germany
Surrealism and Us: Caribbean and African Diasporic Artists Since 1940, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX
- 2023 Juan Francisco Elso: Por América, Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, North Miami, FL
- 2022 The Milk of Dreams, 59th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
208: History into Being, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Under the Spell of the Palm Tree, Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL
- 2021 Though It's Dark, Still I Sing, 34th Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2020 Tesoro: Contemporary Cuban Art, The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum FIU, Miami, FL
- 2019 Where the Oceans Meet, Museum of Art and Design at MDC, Miami, FL
The Figure in Latin American Art, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL
- 2018 We Don't Need Another Hero, 10th Berlin Biennale, Berlin, Germany
- 2017 Art x Cuba: Contemporary Perspectives Since 1989, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany
- 2001 Contemporary Art from Cuba: Irony and Survival on the Utopian Island, Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS; University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, FL
- 2000 Contemporary Art from Cuba: Irony and Survival on the Utopian Island, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI; Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA; University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA
- 1999 La Huella Múltiple, CENCREM / Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Havana, Cuba
The 4th Kochi International Triennial Exhibition of Prints, Kochi, Japan
Afro-Cuban Contemporary Graphic Art, The Kennedy Center, Washington, DC
- 1998 XII Biennial of San Juan of Latin American and Caribbean Engraving, San Juan, Puerto Rico
Contemporary Art from Cuba: Irony and Survival on the Utopian Island, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, AZ
- 1997 97 Kwangju Biennale, Kwangju, South Korea
Pervasive Referents, Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York, NY

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SELECTED BIENNIALS

- 59th Venice Biennale, The Milk of Dreams, Venice, Italy, 2022.
- 34th Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, 2021.
- 10th Berlin Biennale, Berlin, Germany, 2018.
- XII Biennial of San Juan of Latin American and Caribbean Engraving, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1998.
- 97 Kwangju Biennale, Kwangju, South Korea, 1997.
- XLV Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy, 1993.
- 1st Internationale Grafiek Biennale, Maastricht, The Netherlands, 1993.
- Fourth Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba, 1991.

RESIDENCIES

- Brandywine Workshop, Center for the Visual Arts Cuba Project, Philadelphia, PA, 1999.
- Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, 1999.
- Bronski Center, Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, PA, 1999.
- Benson Hall Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design, Rhode Island, 1999.

AWARDS

1997 Prize, XII Biennial of San Juan of Latin American and Caribbean Engraving, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
1993 International Prize, 1st Internationale Grafiek Biennale, Maastricht, The Netherlands.
1993 Prize, Encounter of Engraving '93, Centro Provincial de Artes Plásticas y Diseño, Havana, Cuba.
1990 Mention, La Joven Estampa Award, Casa de las Américas, Havana, Cuba.

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SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York, USA.
- Tate, London, UK.
- The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California, USA.
- The Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, California, USA.
- Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, USA.
- National Museum of Fine Arts, Havana, Cuba.
- National Museum of Engraving, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany.
- Ludwig Museum in the Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.
- Casa de las Américas, Havana, Cuba.
- Wifredo Lam Contemporary Art Center, Havana, Cuba.
- José Lezama Lima House-Museum, Havana, Cuba.
- Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich, Switzerland.
- Lehigh University Art Galleries, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA.
- Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Nkame Mafimba. Belkis Ayon. Belkis Ayón Estate / Turner Libros, 2024.
- Belkis Ayón. Edited by Natalia Zuluaga and Gean Moreno; NAME Publications in collaboration with David Castillo, 2024.
- Belkis Ayón: Sikán Illuminations. Modern Art Oxford, 2024.
- Belkis Ayón: Collographs. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2021.
- Behind the Veil of a Myth. Belkis Ayon. Texts by Cristina Vives; Station Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018.
- Belkis Ayón. Exhibition brochure, El Museo del Barrio, New York, 2017.
- Nkame. Belkis Ayon. José Veigas, Cristina Vives, David Mateo, and Lázara Menéndez; Turner Editores, 2010.