



THE MULTIPLE  
DIMENSIONS OF  
ESTEBAN LISA

HUTCHINSON MODERN  
& CONTEMPORARY

# CONTENTS

4

Biography

6

Composiciones

28

Actos Espaciales

34

Juego con líneas y colores

41

CV



Esteban Lisa, Toledo, Spain, 1981. Courtesy of the Fundación Esteban Lisa.

## ESTEBAN LISA



Esteban Lisa childhood portrait, year unknown. Courtesy of the Fundación Esteban Lisa.

As a young teenager, Esteban Lisa left his parents in Toledo, Spain to live with an aunt and uncle who ran a tavern in Buenos Aires. Lisa worked at the tavern for ten years before joining the Argentine Postal Service. In his spare time, he studied at the Escuela Nacional de Artes (The National School of Arts) in Buenos Aires, from which he graduated as a Professor of Drawing and Painting in 1925. Lisa then began offering painting and drawing classes in his own home. Between the late 1920s and early 1930s, he taught art classes at the Escuela de Adultos (School of Adults) in Buenos Aires. Lisa retired from both the Postal Service and the Escuela de Adultos at the age of sixty, and founded his own art school in Buenos Aires, the Escuela de Arte Moderno “Las Cuatro Dimensiones” (“The Four Dimensions” School of Modern Art) in 1955.

While working in civil service and education, Lisa established a significant artistic career. He painted from the 1930s through the late 1970s, yet he avoided public recognition and was nearly absent from the Buenos Aires art scene. Lisa never exhibited in public; however, he interacted avidly with writers and fellow artists. He was mostly drawn to the art of Paul Klee, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso, and also to theories pertaining to the cosmos and the occult.

Scholars have partitioned Lisa’s oeuvre into distinct phases. His early works contain muted, earthy tones that flirt with figuration through organic compositions suggesting flowers or even landscapes. By 1935, however, his palette becomes richer and livelier, and his works lean more towards abstraction. While the artist’s earlier compositions do include orthogonal lines and geometric elements, his later works incorporate more animated renditions of linear forms and dashes, as well as variances on spherical shapes such as spirals, dots, and circles. Some of Lisa’s best known series are his: *Composiciones* (*Compositions*) which he began circa 1935;

*Actos espaciales* (*Spatial Acts*), created between 1954 and 1957; and *Juegos con líneas y colores* (*Playing with Lines and Colors*), created between 1951 and the 1970s.

While Lisa worked across various media—creating collages, pencil drawings, and pastels—the majority of his works are rendered in oil on cardboard or paper, in a small format. As a result, these paintings are both intimate and highly expressive. They demonstrate a deep engagement with line and color, often hovering in the in-between space of figuration and abstraction. In 1977, Lisa abandoned painting and continued teaching it only to close family and friends.

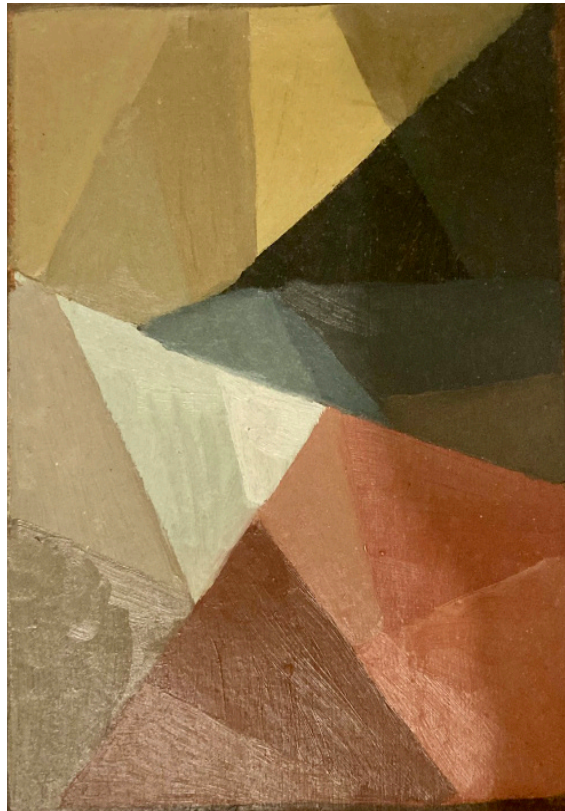
Beyond his significant contributions to the visual arts, Lisa was also an avid writer. He authored more than twelve books, many of which were dedicated to his interest in “cosmovision,” a theory the artist derived based upon Einsteinian-Kantian principles concerned with space-time communication.

Esteban Lisa’s work can be found in a number of private and public collections, including: the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Jack S. Blanton Museum, Austin; Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), Long Beach, CA; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami; Fundación Ortega y Gasset, Madrid; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Fundación Juan March, Madrid; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, amongst others.

Lisa’s work has also been exhibited in numerous prestigious international art fairs, including: ARCO, Madrid; ARTE BA, Buenos Aires; Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami; ARTE FIERA, Bologna; ARTPARIS, Paris; ArtVerona, Trieste; Chicago Art Fair, Chicago; FIAC, Paris; New York Art Fair, New York; PINTA, London; Salon du Dessin, Paris; TEFAF, Maastricht, amongst others.

Susan Bryer

COMPOSICIONES  
(1930-40)



Verso, Side B



*Sin Título (double-sided composition)*, 1930  
Oil on thin board, 9 1/8 x 11 3/4 in  
Side A



Verso, Side B



*Composición (double-sided composition)*, 1935-40  
Oil on thin board, 11 3/4 x 9 1/8 in.  
Side A



Verso, Side B



*Composición (double-sided composition)*, 1935-40  
Oil on thin board, 11 3/4 x 9 1/8 in.  
Side A



*Sin Título (double-sided composition)*, 1940  
Oil on thin board, 9 1/8 x 11 7/8 in.

## COMPOSICIONES (1942-54)

In the 1940s, Esteban Lisa worked on a series of oil paintings on cardboard each titled *Composición* (Composition). The warm toned compositions included ovals, circles, triangles, repeated dots, dashes and lines and other geometric shapes. His previous interest in volume is less apparent in this decade.



*Composición*, 1942  
Oil on board, 11 7/8 x 9 1/8 in.

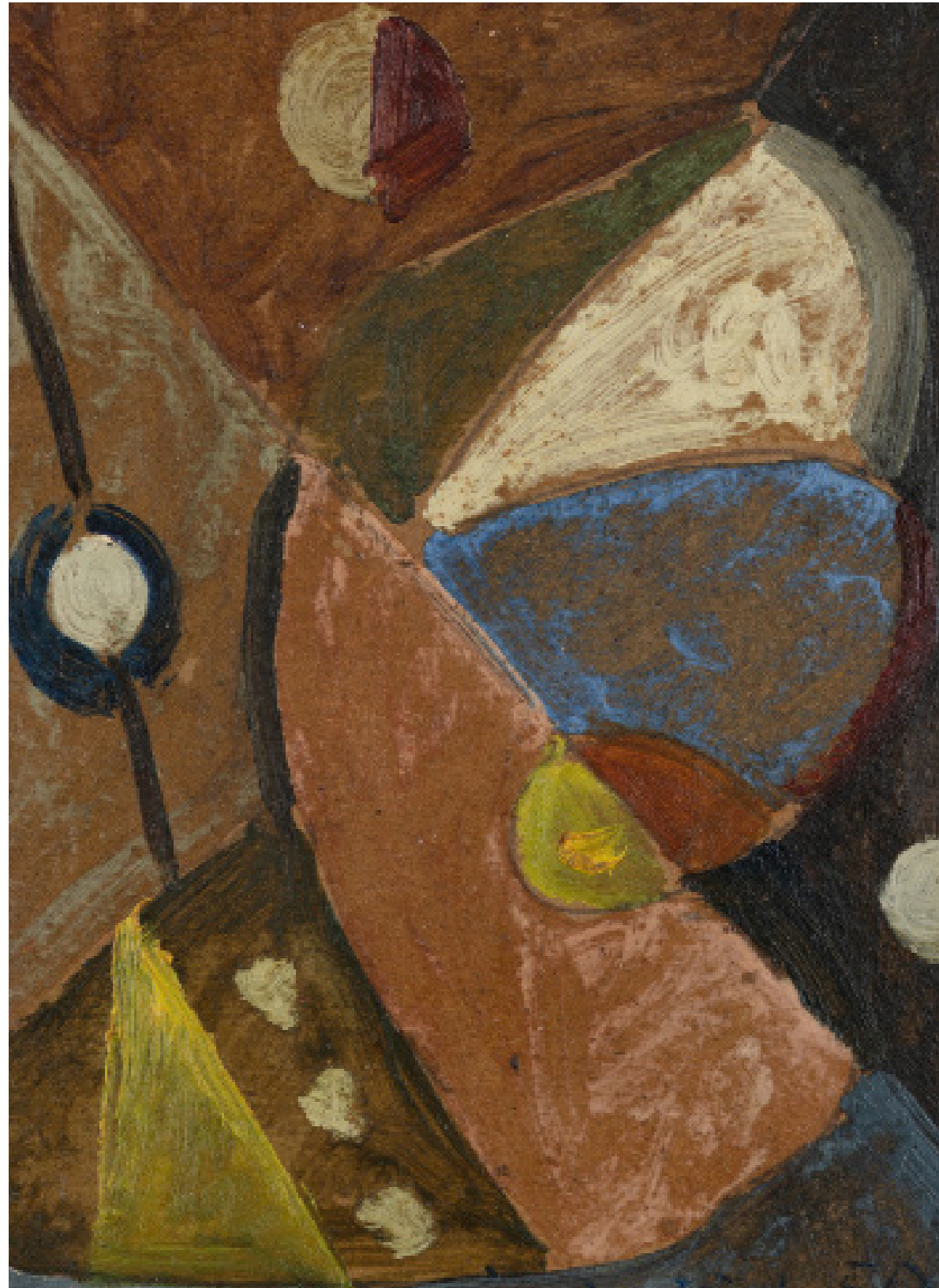




*Composición*, c. 1943  
Oil on board, 11 3/4 x 9 in.



*Composición*, c. 1943  
Oil on board, 11 3/4 x 9 in.



*Composición (double-sided composition)*, 1950  
Oil on thin board, 8 3/4 x 6 3/4 in.



*Composición*, c. 1943  
Oil on board, 11 1/2 x 8 3/4 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1952  
Oil on thin board, 11 1/8 x 6 7/8 in.



*Composición*, 1953  
Oil on thin board, 11 1/4 x 6 3/4 in



*Composición*, 1953  
Oil on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4 in.



*Composición*, 1953  
Oil on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4 in.

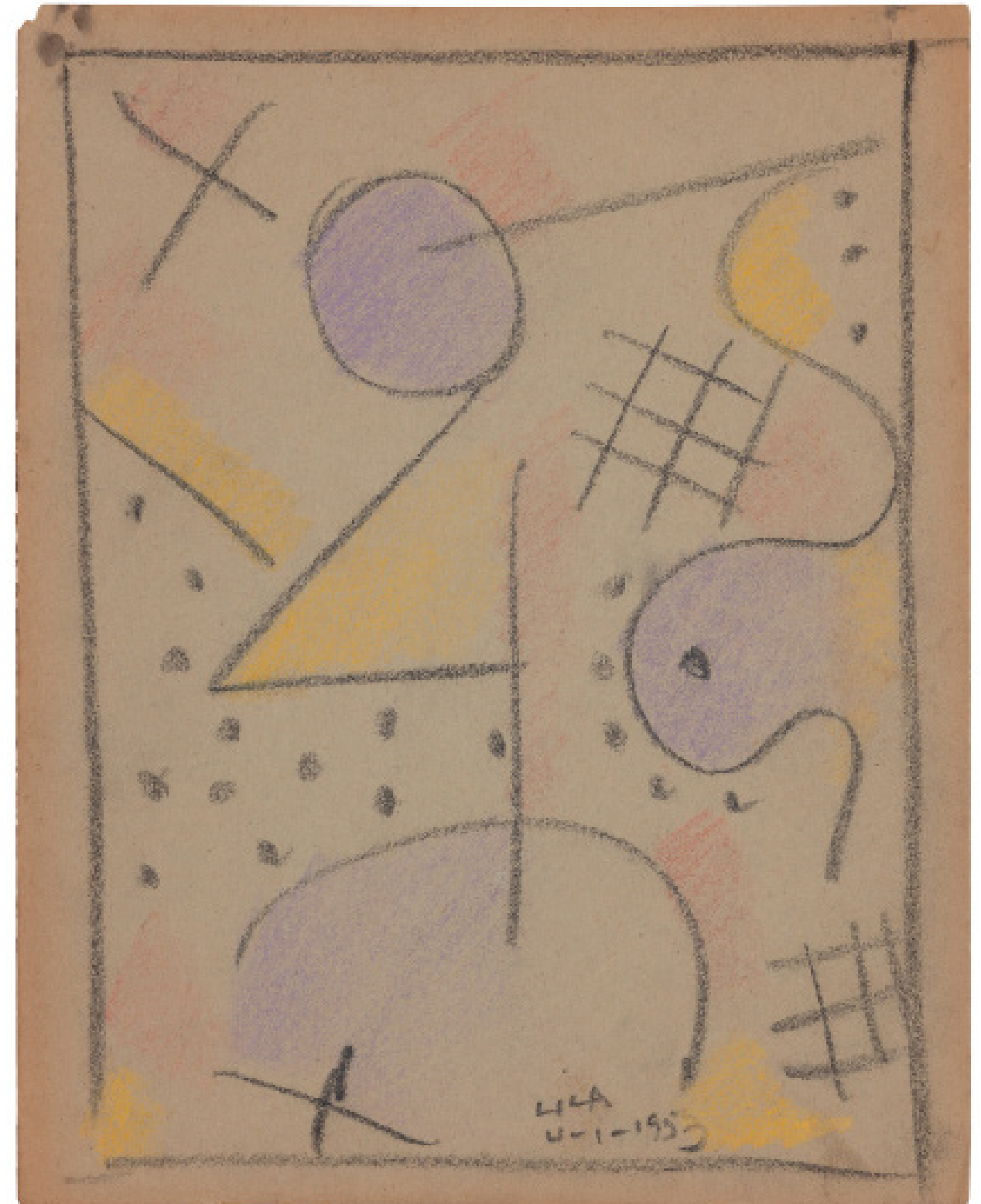
*Composición*, 1954  
Oil on thin card, 13 3/8 x 8 3/4 in.



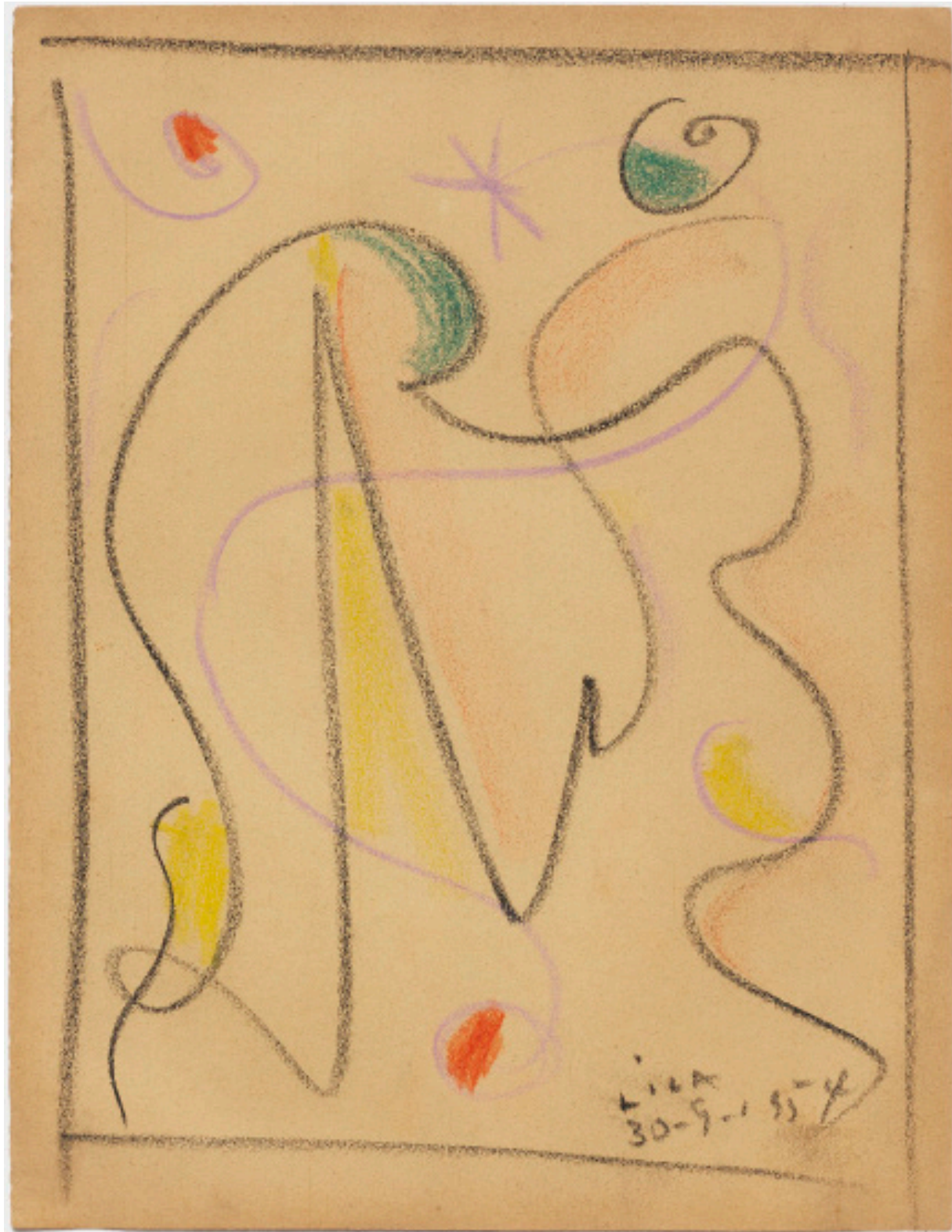
## ACTOS ESPACIALES (1953-1956)

Between 1954 and 1957, Esteban Lisa produced his series *Actos Espaciales* (Spatial Acts), which connected his artistic practice with his interest in the Space Race and the Moon Landing. These two technological events made global news simultaneously, and influenced the artistic production of many artists worldwide. Lisa's *Actos Espaciales* are a contained series of pastels on paper. Lisa drew an intuitive line in black or red pastel that defined and organized each work. Within the drawn frame he included vertical lines and geometric shapes using a limited color palette of green, red, yellow, and purple.

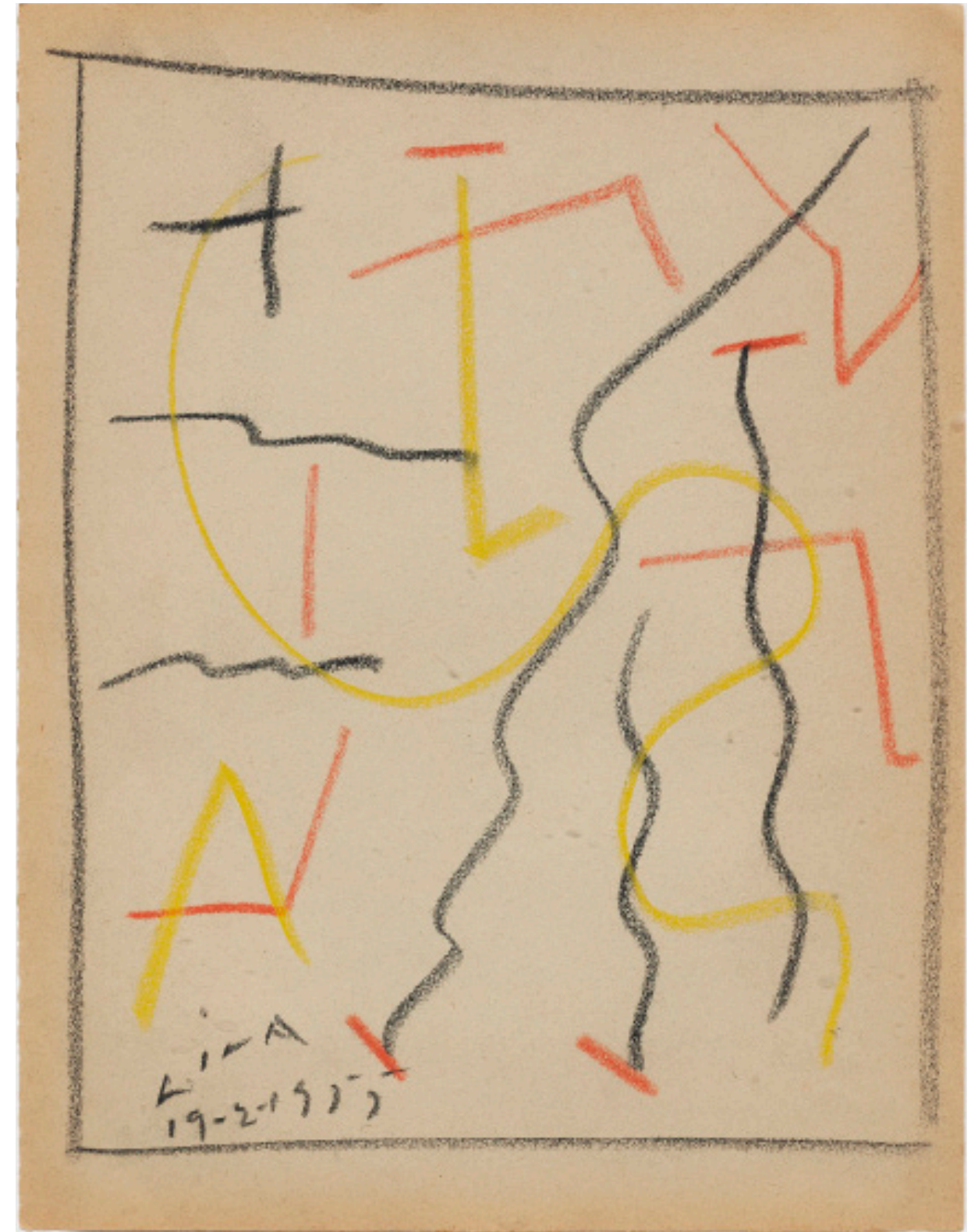
The Space Race and the Moon Landing events led Lisa to organize conferences such as: *La Teoría de la Cosmovisión*, *La Conquista de la Luna y la Ubicación del Hombre en la Era Espacial* (The Theory of Cosmivision, The Conquest of the Moon and the Place of Men in the Space Era), and *La Teoría de la Cosmovisión y el Vuelo de la Apolo 13* (The Theory of Cosmivision and the flight of Apollo 13), both published in 1971.



*Acto Espacial*, 1953  
Pastel on paper, 11 3/8 x 9 1/8 in.

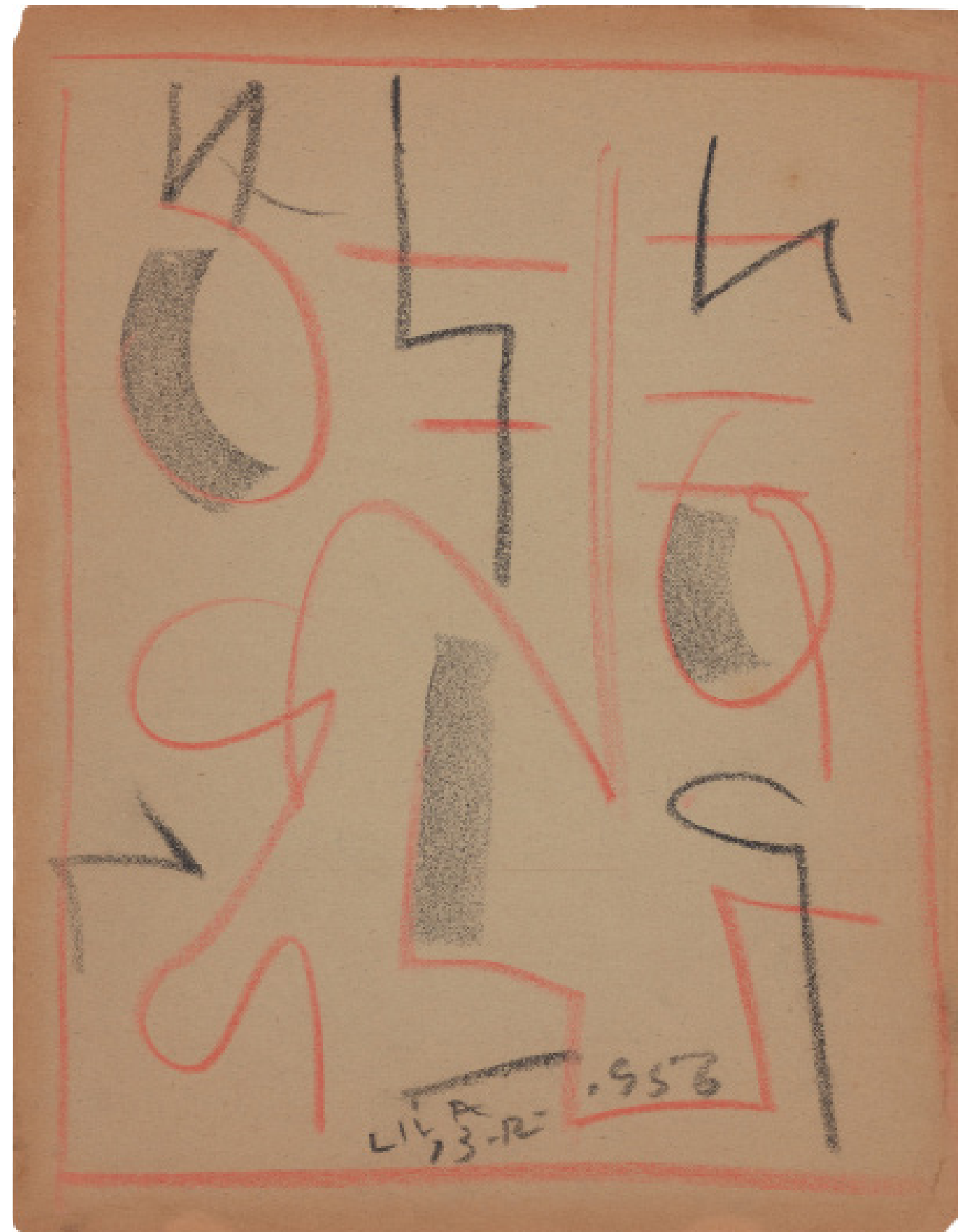


*Acto Espacial*, 1954  
Pastel on paper, 11 7/8 x 9 1/8 in.



*Acto Espacial*, 1955  
Pastel on paper, 11 1/4 x 9 1/8 in.

*Acto Espacial*, 1956  
Pastel on paper, 11 1/2 x 9 1/8 in.



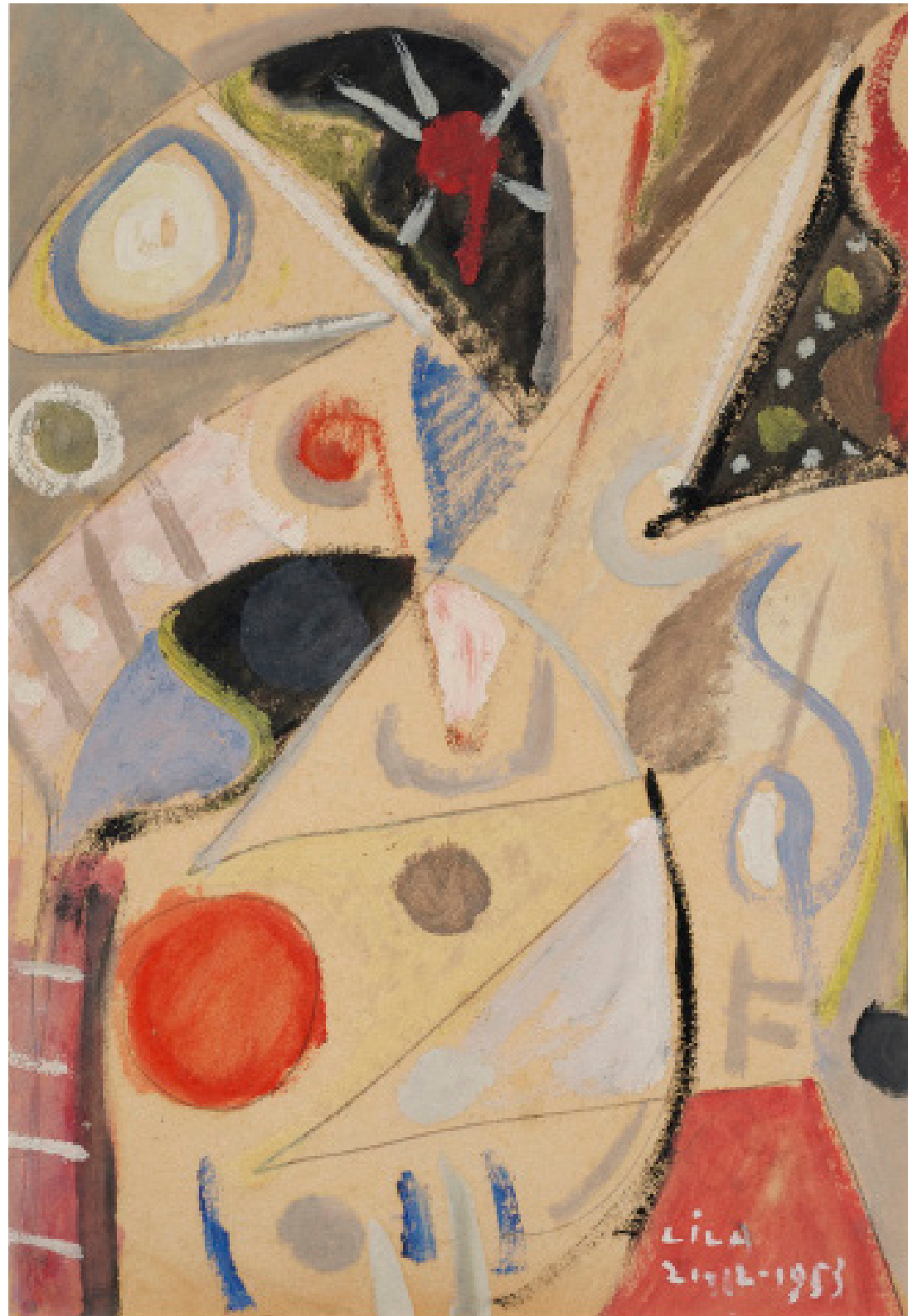


## JUEGO CON LÍNEAS Y COLORES (1953-67)

Lisa's final series, *Juegos con Líneas y Colores* (Playing with Lines and Colors), was created between the 1950s and '70s and marked a departure from oil on cardboard to oil on paper. These works are representative of a meditative process as they were created in a ritualistic manner that stood the duration of nearly twenty years.



*Composición (juego con líneas y colores)*, 1953  
Oil on paper board, 13 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.



*Composición (juego con líneas y colores)*, 1953  
Oil on thin card, 19 3/4 x 13 3/4 in.



*Composición (juego con líneas y colores)*, 1954  
Oil on thin board, 15 5/8 x 12 1/2 in



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1954  
Oil on paper, 13 5/8 x 9 5/8 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1954  
Oil on paper, 11 3/4 x 8 7/8 in.



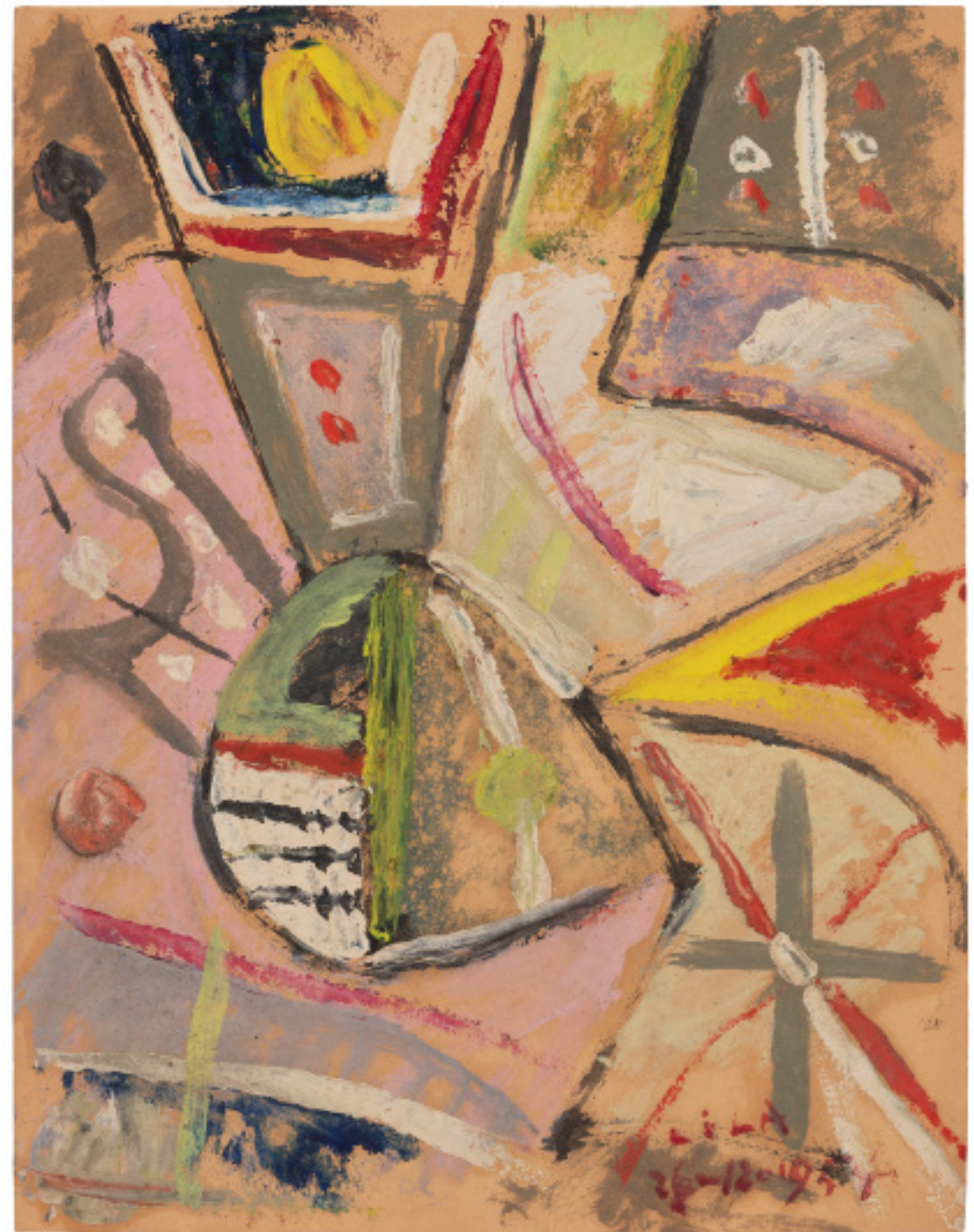
*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1955  
Oil on paper, 11 3/4 x 9 1/8 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1955  
Oil on paper, 11 3/4 x 9 1/8 in.



Juego con líneas y colores, 1955  
Oil on paper, 11 3/4 x 9 1/8 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1954  
Oil on paper, 11 3/4 x 9 1/8 in



*Juego con líneas y colores, 1958*  
Oil on paper, 13 5/8 x 9 1/2 in



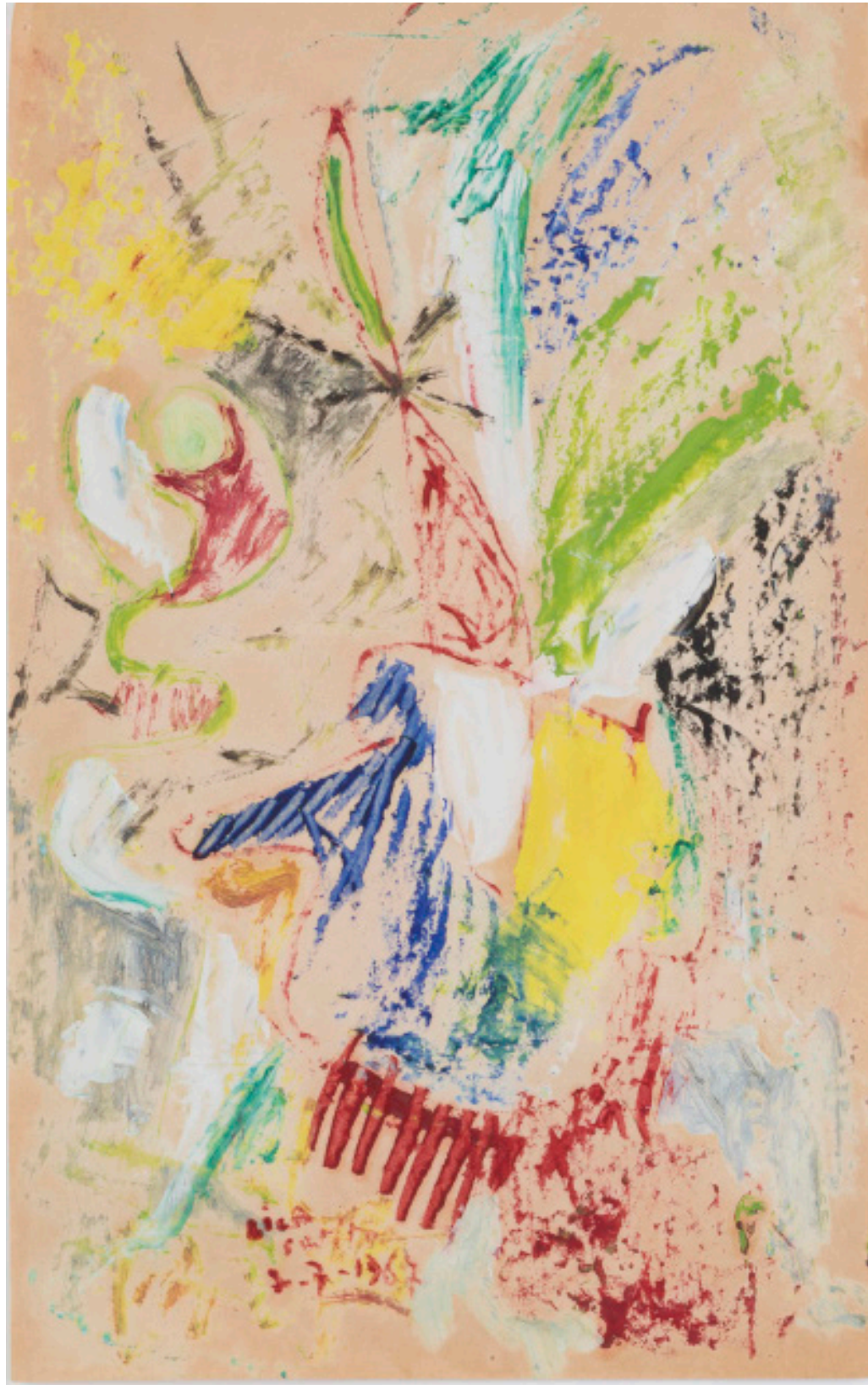
*Juegos con líneas y colores, 1959*  
Oil on paper, 13 3/8 x 8 5/8 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1959  
Oil on paper, 13 3/8 x 8 5/8 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1966  
Oil on paper, 13 3/8 x 8 5/8 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1967  
Oil on paper, 13 3/8 x 8 1/2 in.



*Juego con líneas y colores*, 1967  
Oil on paper, 13 3/8 x 8 1/2 in.



# CV

Esteban Lisa

## ESTEBAN LISA

Born 1895, Hinojosa de San Vicente, Toledo, Spain; Died 1983, Buenos Aires, Argentina

## EDUCATION

1925 Escuela Nacional de Artes (The National School of Arts), Buenos Aires, Argentina

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 Esteban Lisa: El gabinete abstracto, Museu Fundación Juan March, Palma, Spain; Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, Cuenca, Ecuador; Boston College, McMullen Museum of Art, Boston, MA
- 2013 Esteban Lisa: Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain; Museo de Santa Cruz, Convento de Santa Fe, Toledo, Spain
- Esteban Lisa: Retornos, Toledo, 1895, Buenos Aires 1983, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain
- 2012 Esteban Lisa: Playing with Lines and Colors, Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), Long Beach, CA
- 2011 Esteban Lisa: Opere 1935/1963, Galleria Torbandena, Trieste, Italy
- 2010 Esteban Lisa, In the Land of the Cedars: Tradition and Abstraction, Villa Audi, Beirut, Lebanon
- Esteban Lisa: 22 Works in Gouache and Oil from the Artist's Estate, Arnoldi-Livie Galerie, Munich, Germany
- 2009 Esteban Lisa (1895-1983): abstracción, mundo y significado, MUNTREF, Caseros, Argentina
- 2008 Diálogos con Esteban Lisa: Colección Jorge Virgili, Fundación Antonio Pérez, Cuenca, Ecuador
- 2007 Esteban Lisa, Galería Palatina, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2006 Esteban Lisa: El legado del color, Fondo Nacional de las Artes, Casa de la Cultura, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Esteban Lisa: Image Form Force Movement, Galería Ramis Barquet, New York, NY
- 2005 Esteban Lisa: Jugando con líneas y colores, Galería Artur Ramon, Barcelona, Spain
- 2002 Esteban Lisa, Parkerson Gallery, Houston, TX
- Esteban Lisa : Pintado el 25 de mayo, Fundación Esteban Lisa, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2001 Esteban Lisa, Blains Fine Art, London, United Kingdom
- 2000 Esteban Lisa, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, NY
- 1999 Esteban Lisa, Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio A. Caraffa, Córdoba, Argentina
- Esteban Lisa, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 1998 Esteban Lisa, Museo Torres-García, Montevideo, Uruguay
- Esteban Lisa, Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain
- 1997 Esteban Lisa, Galería Palatina, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Esteban Lisa, Municipal de Bellas Artes Juan B. Castagnino, Rosario, Argentina
- 1987 Esteban Lisa, Fundación Esteban Lisa, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 1988 Esteban Lisa, Museo Municipal de Artes Plásticas Eduardo Sívori, Buenos Aires, Argentina

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 Abstracción: from Jean Arp to Richard Serra, Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain
- 2013 Diálogo de musas: música y arte visuales, Espacio de Arte de la Fundación OSDE, Rosario, Argentina
- 2012 Abstracción Latinoamericana, una propuesta, (Barradas, Sarah Grilo, Esteban Lisa, César Paternosto, Gustavo Pérez, Vicente Rojo, Torres-García), Artur Ramon Art, Barcelona, Spain

*Artistas hispano-argentinos vinculados a la Sierra de San Vicente*, Sociedad Central de Arquitectos, Melque, Toledo, Spain

- 2010 *An exhibition of Master Drawings*, Stephen Ongpin Fine Art, London, United Kingdom; Mark Murray Fine Paintings, New York, New York; Stephen Ongpin Fine Art, London, United Kingdom
- HIGHLIGHTS- Internationale Kunstmesse*, Gallery Arnoldi-Livie, Munich, Germany
- Artistas hispano-argentinos vinculados a la Sierra de San Vicente*, Sociedad de Amigos de la Sierra de San Vicente, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2009 *Abstracta*, Galleria Torbandena, Trieste, Italy
- Poéticas del siglo XX*, Palacio Aguirre MURAM, Cartagena, Spain
- Tesoros*, Espacio de Arte Antonio Pérez, Guadalajara, Spain
- 2008 *Nosotros también fuimos inmigrantes. Artistas hispano-argentinos vinculados a la Sierra de San Vicente*, Sociedad de Amigos de la Sierra de San Vicente, Toledo, Spain
- Geometrías: de Rodchenko a Sol Lewitt*, Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain
- 2007 *Arte español de los 50*, Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain
- 2005 *El Arte del Dibujo. El dibujo en el arte*, Fundación BBK, Bilbao, Spain
- 2002 *Esteban Lisa de Arturo al Di Tella*, Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Abstract Art from the Río de la Plata: Buenos Aires and Montevideo 1933– 1953*, Americas Society, New York, NY; Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico
- Dibujos para un siglo*, Caja Duero, Salamanca; Sala de Caja Vital Kutcha, Vitoria; Salón Modernista de Caixa Sabadell, Spain
- 2000 *El Dibujo en el Siglo XX*, Villa García de Arosa, Sala de Exposiciones – Casa de Cultura; Centro Cultural Caja Granada; Centro Cultural Almería, Spain
- Ismos. Arte de Vanguardia (1910–1930) en Europa*, Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain
- El Arte del Dibujo*, Sala Muriedas, Torrelavega; La Residencia, Castro Urdiales y Centro Cultural la Vidriera, Camargo, Spain
- 1999 *Siglo XX Argentino. Arte y Cultura*, Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Vanguardias sobre papel*, Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain

## SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France  
Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Massachusetts  
Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami, Florida  
Jack S. Blanton Museum, University of Texas at Austin  
Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), Long Beach, California  
Sayago and Pardon Latin American Art Collection, Los Angeles, California  
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Fundación Ortega y Gasset, Madrid, Spain  
Fundación Juan March, Madrid, Spain  
Fundación Antonio Pérez, Cuenca, Spain  
Fondo Nacional de las Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Museo Municipal Sívori, Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes Juan B. Castagnino, Rosario, Argentina  
Museo Provincial Emilio Caraffa, Córdoba, Argentina  
Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain  
Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo, Spain

To this day, Fundación Esteban Lisa is dedicated to preserving the legacy of Esteban Lisa by hosting cultural and arts educational events.

Cover image (detail): *Composición*, c. 1943  
Oil on board, 11 1/2 x 8 3/4 in.

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