

Iconographic references

On the cover: *Joaquín Torres García, América invertida (1943. Inverted Map of South America* is an emblematic art-work of Latin American 20th Century art history (1943) by Uruguayan artist: Joaquín Torres García (1874-1949). *Inverted Map of South America*, often called the *Upside-down Map*, is an ink-on paper drawing that places the south of the continent in the north. It is full of symbolism with a fish, the moon, the sun and a sailing ship. The equatorial line is shown below the latitude line for Montevideo, located at 34°41' south, 56°9' west. The South Pole is marked at the top of the drawing. All of these symbols are meaningful and recur in Torres García's other works. For example, interpreters regard the fish as a symbol of life and fecundity, and as Torres García said, it represents the physical and formal universe. Torres García, artist and art theorist, is also known as the founder of constructive universalism. In 1935, Torres García published "The School of the South", which is considered his first Latin Americanist manifesto. Torres García was proposing that Native America was the point of origin for a new hemispheric visual-arts tradition founded on the recovery of the pre-Hispanic past and its reconciliation with universalist art.

It is still possible to find a variety of interpretations and readings of this map, including the idea that the countries of Latin America feel slighted by the dominance of the developed north, and the conclusion drawn by some that Latin American art should go back to its pre-colonial origins. For more than half a century, *Inverted Map of South America* has been iconic in Latin American culture. It is a piece that has been used to tell different stories, and the phrase, "the north is our south" is ubiquitous. The image is synonymous with a country and with a style of art, constructive universalism.