

Antonia Eiriz and the Education of the Eye

By Juan Sarracino

Ten Prints from a Municipal Collection and the Testimony of Tomás Sánchez in 1987

In October 1987, Tomás Sánchez wrote a few lines about Antonia Eiriz that shift attention from her style to the experience of learning from her. His central observation is brief: she “knows how to teach people to see,” translating his phrase *sabe enseñar a ver*. The testimony accompanies the printed booklet *Grabados Antonia Eiriz*, associated with the printmaking event held in November that year. Read alongside its checklist, it reveals two complementary forms of continuity: the one a teacher leaves in her students’ perception, and the one a collection makes possible by preserving particular objects. [1, pp. 1-3, 6]

Sánchez recalls a transformation still active in his present. Learning encompassed colors, textures, and forms; his gratitude arose from having acquired a more penetrating attention. The short text does not describe exercises, teaching programs, or technical instructions. Its force operates on another scale: one artist remembers his teacher for her ability to change his relationship with the visible world. Teaching emerges as a practice that continues after the lesson, whenever the former student looks again.

This distinction matters when studying an artistic teacher without reducing her influence to the reproduction of a manner. Sánchez does not offer resemblance between their works as the measure of pedagogical success. Instead, he describes an individual experience of discovery. His words suggest a demanding understanding of education: learning to distinguish relationships and qualities that previously went unnoticed. This interpretation rests on his testimony, although a personal recollection cannot establish a systematic theory of Eiriz’s teaching.

Teaching within the chronology

The booklet’s biographical section places educational activity in several settings. It records advisory work at the School for Crafts Instructors between 1962 and 1964 and at the National School of Art between 1965 and 1969. It also dates to 1972 the beginning of a popular-art movement involving community groups and instructors from different provinces. As presented in the 1987 document, this chronology broadens the meaning of teaching: specialized training appears alongside work with different participants and in other settings. [1, p. 5]

The catalogue thus makes room for the relationships that accompanied artistic production. Its lists of exhibitions, awards, and advisory activities follow familiar publishing conventions, but their coexistence raises a productive question: how is the memory of an artist preserved when her activity includes both artworks and experiences of learning? Sánchez's testimony provides an answer through a student's memory. The final page offers another through the museum.

Ten works and several possibilities of printmaking

The final checklist contains ten prints, all recorded as *Untitled*, dated between 1962 and 1967. Eight are lithographs, including two in color; the remaining works are an etching and a drypoint. The lithograph entries give Havana as the place, while the last two entries give Paris and the year 1967. The document lists dimensions in centimeters and states that all the works belong to the collection of the Municipal Museum of San Miguel del Padrón. It describes that group in 1987, without explaining its accession history or present whereabouts. [1, p. 6]

Its chronological concentration also deserves attention. Six works are dated 1963, while 1962 and 1965 account for one each; the other two belong to 1967. This distribution cannot measure Eiriz's entire graphic output. It does reveal the particular selection made available by the booklet: a lithographic core from the early 1960s, accompanied by two techniques involving incised metal plates. Technical variety exists within a small group and calls attention to differences that the general category of "prints" can obscure.

Dimensions contribute to this material understanding. The lithograph dated 1965 is listed at 78 × 57 centimeters, while the 1967 etching measures 31.5 × 25. The difference in format is substantial, although the checklist does not specify whether these are image or sheet dimensions. Compositions should not be inferred from those figures. Their value lies in restoring scale and technique to objects sharing a generic title. Each entry preserves the possibility of future identification through comparison with the prints and museum inventory.

A collection that makes renewed attention possible

Municipal ownership anchors this account, but it must be distinguished from the exhibition venue. The *Bibliografía Cubana 1987* records *Grabados*, with an introduction by Tomás Sánchez, at the Museum of Guanabacoa in November 1987, as part of the printmaking event. The booklet itself separately lists, within Eiriz's exhibition history, *25 Grabados de Antonia Eiriz* at San Miguel del Padrón. Its ten final entries should not become twenty-five, nor should the two references automatically be merged into a single occasion. [2, p. 78, entry 3106; 1, p. 4]

That distinction makes the group more interesting. It allows us to consider artistic memory sustained by local institutions and the circulation of their holdings, although the precise

itinerary requires further documentation. The collection's significance here does not rest on prestige. It lies in having brought together and recorded works on paper, enabling a career to be revisited through its techniques and dates.

There is an affinity between this work of preservation and the learning recalled by Sánchez. Both extend encounters with art: preservation keeps material evidence available, while learning sustains a way of attending to it. The 1987 catalogue brings these dimensions together without collapsing their differences. At this scale, Eiriz's history acquires a precision that broad biographical accounts often lose: teaching and collecting can multiply the opportunities to see.

Source note: page references to the 1987 booklet follow the preserved PDF, which combines a reproduced cover with re-typeset text. The bibliographic entry was checked against the digitization of the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí publication held by the University of Florida.

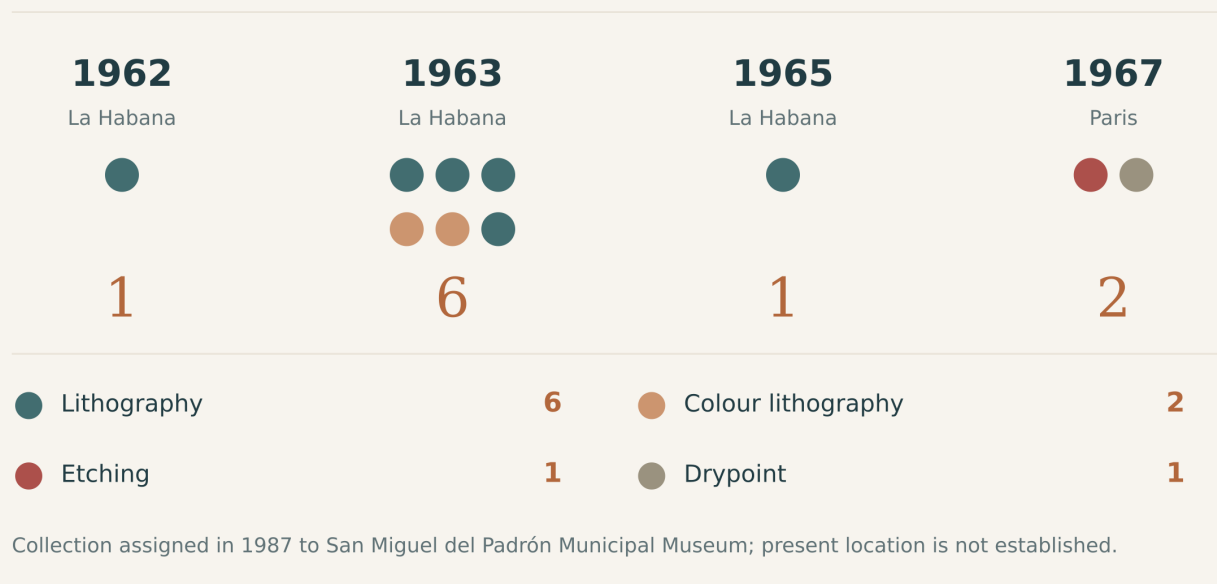
The ten prints in the catalogue

No.	Medium	Year	Dimensions (cm)	Place
1	lithograph	1962	38 × 31	Havana
2	lithograph	1963	39 × 32	Havana
3	lithograph	1963	39 × 53	Havana
4	lithograph	1963	52 × 47.5	Havana
5	colour lithograph	1963	35 × 43	Havana
6	colour lithograph	1963	44 × 33.5	Havana
7	lithograph	1963	57 × 45.5	Havana
8	lithograph	1965	78 × 57	Havana
9	etching	1967	31.5 × 25	Paris
10	drypoint	1967	49.7 × 32.3	Paris

Source [1], p. 6 of the preserved PDF. All works are listed as untitled. The booklet does not specify whether dimensions refer to the image or the sheet. Entry numbers have been added for ease of reference.

Ten prints, four dates

The selection in the 1987 booklet · Each circle represents one checklist entry



Fuente / Source: Grabados Antonia Eiriz / Encuentro de Grabado 87, C06, p. PDF 6.

Mutually exclusive categories: 6 lithographs plus 2 in colour = 8 lithographs in total.

The ten print checklist entries, grouped by date and medium according to the 1987 booklet. Editorial chart.

Sources and references

[1] Tomás Sánchez; Dirección de Artes Plásticas y Diseño, Ministerio de Cultura; Dirección Provincial de Cultura. Grabados Antonia Eiriz / Encuentro de Grabado 87. Testimony: October 1987; cover: November 1987; printing: 1987. PDF pp. 1-6, especially 3, 5 and 6. Digital copy with reproduced cover and apparently re-typeset interior; the original physical booklet has not been examined. Sarracino archive, document C06.

[2] Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Departamento de Investigaciones Bibliográficas; compiled by Elena Graupera Arango and Juana Ma. Mont Cárdenas. Bibliografía Cubana 1987, número 6, noviembre-diciembre. Havana, 1988. Printed p. 78, entry 3106; PDF p. 90; title page, PDF p. 3. Contemporary bibliographical record, visually checked; not an examination of the exhibition catalogue or opening records. Online source