

REGINA SILVEIRA

In October 2001, the Guggenheim Museum presented *Brazil: Body and Soul*, a major exhibition exploring Brazilian art and culture, and at the same time celebrated the grand opening of its Sackler Center for Arts Education. Intrigued by the work of exhibition artist Regina Silveira, the education department invited her to propose a project inspired by her work and artistic process. Her proposal evolved into a dynamic public offering that ultimately would integrate both of these landmark events.

The site-specific nature of Silveira's work and her interests in engaging community participants in her process laid the groundwork for our initial discussions. Would she be interested in creating an inaugural installation for the Sackler Center that could both respond to the unique architectural design of its exhibition gallery and involve a collaborative component with a targeted audience?

The artist proposed to work with educators from the greater New York metropolitan area to install her work, entitled *To Be Continued. . . . (Latin American Puzzle)*. Shown previously in cities throughout Brazil and the U.S., the piece takes on a unique arrangement in each installation based on discussions generated by the work and spatial considerations. For this piece, Silveira culls images from newspapers, tourists guides, magazines, and other print material that reflect popular and sometimes stereotypical views associated with these Latin American icons. Copies of the fragmented images are mounted as individual puzzle piece templates and then assembled and reconfigured to form a new coherent whole each time the work is presented. According to the artist, *To Be Continued. . . . (Latin American Puzzle)* is a kind of mental map that comments on superficial knowledge of Latin America and suggests a problematic identity, represented

visually by the chaotic and unattainable connections between different pieces.”

Silveira introduced her project at the Guggenheim with a slide discussion that provided an overview of her work and processes. A discussion about the meanings of and relationships between the various icons and images included in *To Be Continued. . . .* led to the culminating task for the educators and artist—to collaboratively configure the more than one hundred images in the work. Not only did the group's installation conform

perfectly to the unique curvature of the exhibition gallery walls but the piece provided audiences with a provocative contemporary complement to *Brazil: Body and Soul*.

Silveira's concept inspired further studio art-based extensions that utilized the puzzle piece as a metaphor for exploring students' own cultural and geographical identities, iconography, and stereotypes. Teachers who worked with the artist were inspired to bring their classes to the museum and create

their own school-based puzzle murals. The teachers also recognized that Silveira's

“I know that I can take these ideas back to my school because there is a great need for a community building event.”

—Anonymous teacher participant



REGINA SILVEIRA WORKS WITH A TEACHER PARTICIPANT TO INSTALL HER WORK IN THE SACKLER CENTER. PHOTO BY ELLEN LABENSKI.

universal puzzle piece, which fit together either horizontally or vertically, could be used to explore visual images associated with almost any area of the curriculum. They had therefore not only become an integral part of the mural installation, but also gained a teaching tool that would continue to be used in their classrooms. One teacher commented that the project supported her community building efforts to “connect students from two different areas who have never met but certainly share similar experiences, ideas, and cultural backgrounds.”