



Eduardo Félix Abela Villarreal (San Antonio de los Baños, July 3rd, 1889 - Havana, November 9th, 1965) was a Cuban artist and painter.

Although his first job was cigar maker, he manifested a great attraction for the plastic arts at the age of twenty, so in 1912 he moved to Havana and entered the San Alejandro National Academy of Fine Arts. He also trained at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris, France. He was a founding member of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) and the Free Study of Painting and Sculpture in Havana, where he was also director, and participated as a jury in the VIII National Salon of Painting and Sculpture.

He began publishing humorous drawings in Havana newspapers. He lived and worked in Spain between 1921 and 1924, the year he returned to Cuba. His first exhibition was held in 1924 at the Saloon of Modern Art in Madrid. In 1925 he created his most famous character *The Fool*, which served as an instrument to fight against Gerardo Machado's tyranny. *The Fool* gave him a wider and more effective type of popularity: influence in the social environment as an ingenious and sharp humorist and economic development. The press "paid" because Abela's cards were searched every day by the mass of readers. While the Machadist dictatorship sank in blood and outrages, *The Fool* mocked censures and "passed through fool, but was as witty as many Cubans in the street." The fall of Machado in 1933 marked the end of his journalistic work. At that time he went to Italy and as consul of the Cuban government arrived in Milan.

On his return to Cuba he painted some of his notable works from that period: *Guajiros*, Cuban peasants, (awarded at the II National Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture in 1938) and *Los Novios*, those engaged in love relations. He created Free Study for Painters and Sculptors, for an unconventional and truly incentive teaching of

artistic creation. He joined the work of painters who introduce more modern artistic languages ??and exhibited at the New Art exhibition. He traveled to Europe and lived in Paris for two years, where he had enough success to exhibit at the Zak Gallery.

Between 1942 and 1952 he carried out diplomatic missions in Mexico and Guatemala. In the latter country he received the National Painting Prize (1947). There he also painted *El Chaos* (1950), which marked a substantial transformation of his expressive language: from medium-format paintings to small-scale pieces; from a solid modeling of figures to an *idyllic, detailed and meticulous* atmosphere with references to the world of Paul Klee and Marc Chagall. After returning to Cuba in 1954, he produced notably in quantity and quality small jewels, which he exhibited in numerous samples; among them a retrospective in the Gallery of Havana in 1964.

In 1957 he exhibited for the first time in a group show during the IV São Paulo Biennial, held in Parque do Ibirapuera in *São Paulo*, Brazil. An exposition to bestow homage to Eduardo Abela was held in 1981 during the II International Biennial of Humor, held at the Eduardo Abela Gallery, in San Antonio de los Baños, Havana (the current Artemisa province).