

QUEREMOS  
TANTO a  
RIUS



## *We Love Rius so Much*

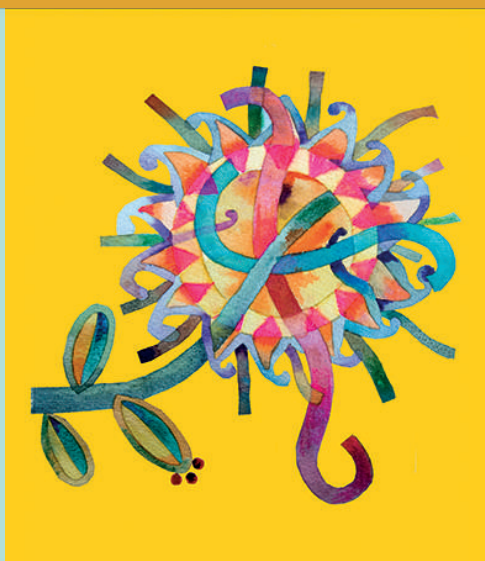
Eduardo del Río, *Rius* was the most important Mexican cartoonist of the second half of the 20th Century and is one of the crucial illustrators in the history of Mexican cartooning. His generation used an innovative sense of humor, texts that were both critical and funny and a particular and schematic drawing style that renovated Mexican cartooning history.

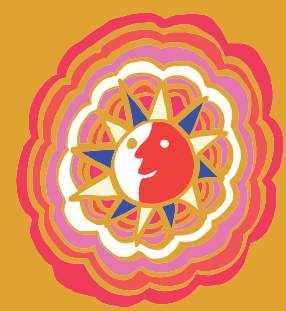
For several decades, *Rius* editorial drawings were at the forefront of the fight for freedom of speech in México. In the middle of the Cold War, he questioned Macarthyite\* dogma and the ruling PRI party's authoritarianism. In the current neoliberal era, he was ever critical of the free market policies. He worked in different publications and helped, more than most, to keep pushing the limits of freedom of speech. Because of this, *Rius* was one of the most important cartoonists in the history of Mexican journalism, as well as one of the most beloved.

Two of his now classic comic strips, *Los Supermachos* and *Los Agachados*, make him one of the greatest storytellers of the 20th Century and one of the best and most recent examples of a costumbrist comic strip. Thorough these works as well as his books he became a professor of the masses. He invented the didactic comic strip, and used it to tackle complex subjects and bring them closer to a wider audience. Carlos Monsiváis said that this cartoonist did a better promotion of reading in our country than all the official programs established by the Public Education Ministry.

Given the long friendship between *Rius* and Carlos Monsiváis, and the support he gave the Estanquillo Museum since its inception and the establishment of its archive (he donated an considerable part of his own personal archive to this institution), the Estanquillo has joined the efforts of family, friends and disciples, many of them part of the staff at *El Chamuco* and *Los Hijos del Averno* magazines, in remembering *Rius* affectionately with this exhibition: they contributed materials that were presumed lost; it shows little known sides of his artistic work and it serves a homage with different kinds of works, many of them created specifically for this exhibition.

\*Term that refers to the political action of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy who, between 1950 and 1956 began a series of violent enquiries to identify, discredit and censor people suspected of sympathizing with Communist ideas.





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## The first years

Eduardo del Río used to tell the story that he worked at Gayosso Funerary Agency when one day an editor saw him drawing cartoons and invited him to work for *JA-JA* magazine. In *Rius'* personal archive we find several original drawings that date back to those years. Here they are exhibited for the first time.



## Influences

The great teachers in the fifties, in the years when I started to get interested in cartooning, undoubtedly were these seven: el *Chango* Cabral, Arias Bernal, Freyre, Audiffred, Fa-cha, Medina De La Vega y Guasp [...] These were the magnificent seven, renowned for their work [...]

My ideological sympathies tended to side more with what Isaac and Quezada thought, who without considering them leftist, had an important critical component towards Mexican *priista* society [...]

Abel Quezada, along with Steinberg and Oski made up the third angle of my graphic humor Holy Trinity

Eduardo del Río, *Rius. Rius Para Principiantes*

## Rius in los Yunaited Steits

*Rius* says:

...one day I was invited by the cultural attaché of the U.S. embassy to attend the screening of a documentary about a North American cartoonist [...] Once in the party, amidst whiskeys, the embassy's press officer informed me unofficially that I had been chosen to visit the U.S., all expenses paid, invited by the State Department (Foster Dulles, of all people, the father of the Cold War). Others who had made the trip previously were *Fa-cha* and Freyre, so it struck me as odd that I was chosen in 1959.

I accepted immediately. Let's say I did not sympathize that much with the United States and its anti-us policies (remember Guatemala as a recent example), but I did not have much sympathy for the other side either, because they keep on doing their tricky business.

So, on April 20, 1959 I took an American Airlines flight to Washington, through Atlanta, to travel around half of the country. It was the first time I flew.



The same thing that happened with the Catholic Church, happened to me with the U.S.: I only had to get to know them to put aside all my sympathies. I am not talking about the American people, who are very vital and crazy people, I am talking about the government's policies.

Several notes our cartoonist took of the trip in New York, New Orleans, and different jazz clubs still survive. The master thought that these drawings were lost forever, today however they are shown for the first time.



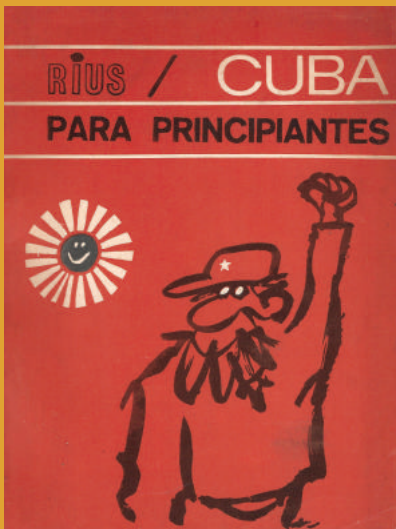
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## The Cold War

After the Second World War, the world stood divided between two great blocs: the so called “free world”, headed by Washington, and the Socialist bloc, headed by the Soviet Union. Soon, these two empires involved themselves in a lengthy confrontation: the Cold War.

During this time, in several countries of the “free world” there was an oppressive climate of censorship and anti-communist propaganda. In Mexico, governed by a regime that came out of a great revolutionary movement, the situation was no less oppressive and the State enforced a tight control over the press and other media. Only a few thoughtless and mad people dared to go against the grain. Rius was one of them.



## Rius in La Prensa

Between 1955 and 1961, the cartoonist worked for several print publications. *Ovaciones*, *Mañana*, *Revista de Revistas*, *La Nación*, *Novedades*, *Diario de la Tarde* y *La Prensa*, among others. Some of the material were part of the book *Rius (1955-1958) Primeras porquerías*.

For this exhibition we present a selection of original *Rius Works* for *La Prensa*. These drawings are important because it was in this period that the cartoonist consolidated his sense of humor, his political positions and his graphic style. Most of these materials were not compiled in any of his books and it was considered lost.

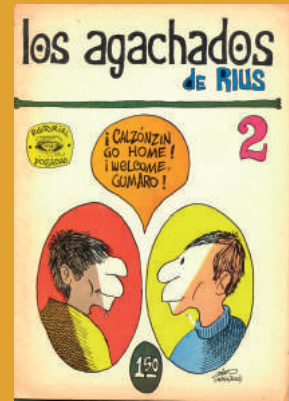




# Queremos Tanto a Rius



Rius contributed to enrich the Estanquillo Museum’s archive by donating more than a hundred originals from his strips *Los Supermachos* and *Los Agachados*, as well as tens of cartoons published in magazines and newspapers, or also incorporated in his books. Also it included hundreds of cutouts and photographs that *Rius* used for his collages and collected to include them in his designs in many of his publications.



## Rius and the 1968 student movement

In the midst of the ceremonious and stifling atmosphere of Mexican politics in the 1960s, humor was a space for freedom. In particular, in the National press the carefree work done by cartoonists like Abel Quezada, Alberto Isaac and Eduardo del Río, *Rius*.

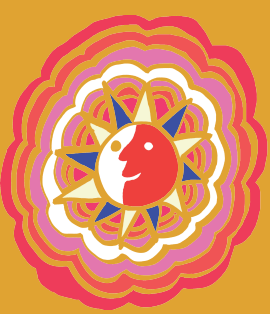
Politically, *Rius* was the most radical and engaged of them all, and that is why he was expelled from all the papers he worked for, and soon found himself unemployed. Editorial Meridano hired him to draw a weekly strip, and in 1965 the cartoonist published *Los Supermachos*, a political strip that made fun of politicians by means of invented characters. The experiment was a success, the magazine soon grew its circulation to the hundreds of thousands and became a space for freedom. *Rius* soon became a model for young Mexicans and his talks filled theaters and auditoriums.



Old socialist engravers, most of them with close ties to the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* (TGP) abandoned the young rebel students. Also, the cartooning old guard aligned itself with the government and joined the discredit campaigns against the young people. On the other hand, many of the cartoonists sympathized with the Left, they showed support for the strikers, not without fear (and with good reason). Eduardo del Río, *Rius*, used to tell that he drew the sketches for some of the posters and stickers but he disguised his style to avoid retaliation.

Arnulfo Aquino, graphic artist, tells:

*Through the characterization of policemen and soldiers as monkeys and gorillas, as repressive primates, political cartoons had a direct influence in the images of graphic arts. This influence comes from Eduardo del Río “Rius”, the first direct critic of the political system and of the “PRIgovernment”; his cartoons, as well as his strips Los Supermachos and Los Agachados, were seen as denunciations during the student movement.*



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In the broadest sense of the word, *Rius* was a teacher. He taught in schools. Under his tutelage, several generations of cartoonists acquired a style in our country and many of the current political cartoonists consider themselves disciples of his. Also, he worked closely with a number of cartoonists throughout the decades. This tight bond formed itself in the editorial boards of *La Garrapata*, *El Chahuistle*, and leading to *El Chamuco* and *Los Hijos del Averno*, where he entrusted his closest putative descendants with directing one of the magazines with the longest perseverance in defending free speech in this country. Its pages are still a school for new talent and a showcase for some of the best cartooning talent.



## ***La mar y sus pescaditos***

In several stages of his life, *Rius* practiced painting. His series *La mar y sus pescaditos* joins his history as a humorous cartoonist with graphic experimentation.



*In 55 years of compulsive work, Rius has been through several stages, he retains his enthusiasm and consolidates his reader's affections. By imagining a typical town, he turns into an archetypal one; by portraying an astute indigenous person, he adds a prototype that is not racist to the way popular themes are portrayed. He maintains his civic values and sense of responsibility at every moment. He imposes himself and triumphs over censure, he defeats the repressive apparatus, retains his millions of readers, and as a good founder of San Garabato, he chooses simplicity –his method for life and work sharpened every day by the will to laugh.*

- Carlos Monsiváis

