

When art is contextualized within a geographic location or historical period, certain elements can be said to connect one artist's work to that of another. This is a criteria used for the unification of artwork into periods, styles and national identities. These collective reference points seem to be important in forming identity for artists and their work, though generalizations necessary in this process can diminish the perception of individuality. Often connections span idiomatic boundaries within a given period. Take Baroque music and architecture for instance, both are described as being intricate and ornate in detail. In our modern world, the works of author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and composer, Leo Brower provide for a similar comparison to be made. In this case, both process the traditional aspects of their heritage within a contemporary artistic context.

In "One Hundred Years of Solitude", Gabriel Garcia Marquez writes from the perspective of his native culture as filtered through the eyes of the modern world. He infuses the work with stories and images passed down through generations, imbeds it alongside historical events and steeps it within the magic realism of South America contemporary literature. His work is truly the product of cultural transformation and integration. The same can be said about Leo Brower, a Cuban born composer and contemporary of Marquez. Brower is in many respects the preeminent twentieth century composer of music for classical guitar; the successor to Brazilian born Hector Villa Lobos. His compositional style is a product of the intermingling of European classical, Cuban folk music, and inspirations from American jazz, rock, Indian ragas and African music. Similar to Marquez, his work is a combination of traditional elements and the influences of the world. It is this cultural multiplicity and global pollination that unites the work of these two artists. They are a generation representative of a global awareness and cross-pollination that is the foundation for much of what the 20th century has been and what the 21st century will personify. As both artists come from relatively newly developed countries rife with socio/political histories, their work is a reflection of the process of integrating history with progress, the conservation of the past and the embrace of the future. Their work is likely to be the contemporary link to the past for many people, histories facing possible extinction through the process of globalization without conscious conservation. Partial preservation, however, will be within these contemporary works of art, establishing new traditions and historical precedent. What Marquez and Brower preserve through their works is the essence of their respective cultures; indefinable, transcendent, and beautiful. These are things that it is so vital for our present day civilization to recognize. It would be a tragedy to lose completely the individualities that define a people for the sake of globalization. Artists such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Leo Brower help to contain the endangerment of their own respective heritages through contemporary interpretations of their national identities.