

‘Where are you from?’: a question we often use to initiate conversation at moments of first introduction.

Although simple as it might sound, it is quite a loaded query, potentially deeply inquisitive, for how we answer it can reveal so much about ourselves and become an entryway to a dialogue that delves into our identity. Where we are from is not only a place when we consider how we define ourselves. Language and even the accent with which we speak it can reveal something beyond the singular locale of one’s birth or home but also the geographical path our lives have taken us. And often our cultural and familial backgrounds play an equal role in where we consider ourselves ‘from’ in a world that gets ever more demographically complex. Place, history, and language have a great influence on the broader sense of ‘where we are from’.

For this first series of exhibitions, *20/21* chooses this question as its conceptual theme, a form of introduction to the people of La Palma, both for its spirit of curiosity and its invitation to initiate dialogue. Beginning with the inaugural presentation and changing in sequence every six months, the temporary shows will approach art from these defining perspectives of identity: language (*Contemporary Spanish Art*), history (*History: a microcosmic perspective*) and place (*Somewhere: Contemporary Landscape*). And with each, three independent exhibitions will also be introduced, unveiling them one at a time by thematically tying them into the respective themes (*Spanish Art of the mid-20th century*, *Anselm Kiefer*, and *Miquel Barceló*), remaining permanently on view thereafter to serve as anchors to the Art experience at *20/21*.

CHAPTER ONE

Spanish Art: the evolution of a visual language

Spanish Art of the mid-20th century + Contemporary Spanish Art
September 2023 – March 2024

CHAPTER TWO

History

History: a microcosmic perspective + Anselm Kiefer: making sense of the senseless
May – December 2024

CHAPTER THREE

Somewhere

Contemporary Landscape + Miquel Barceló: the canvas as landscape
January – July 2025

**20/21 espacio de arte
la palma**

CHAPTER ONE

Spanish Art: the evolution of a visual language

Artistic language, like any other, evolves. It contains all the complexities of the histories of a people, including but not exclusively their artistic movements – a collage of influences through time. Spanish Art through the ages is no exception to this type of development. In fact, perhaps one can say it is a prime example when one considers its rich and powerful history already manifested in its classical art – Velázquez, El Greco, Ribera, Goya, only to scratch the surface. As well as in more recent history, artists like Picasso, Gris and Miró define much of our visual dictionary. Spanish art and visual language has been innovating and leading the way for centuries. The permanent exhibition “Spanish Art of the mid-20th Century” in conjunction with the temporary presentation of “Contemporary Spanish Art” give us just a partial overview of the past six decades of what we can consider the current evolution of the Spanish visual language.

Spanish Art of the mid-20th century

The years directly following World War II were pivotal for the plastic arts throughout Europe. The development of a gestural and abstract style that found its epicenter in Paris responded to the atrocities and trauma of war by focusing its creative energies away from previously naturalistic, figurative and geometric traditions. This pictorial movement known as *Art Informel* would quickly become the most influential artistic trend and therefore the *lingua franca* of its time.

At the end of the 1950s, Spain was just beginning to emerge from a period of social and cultural seclusion which had brought about a conservatism reflected in its artistic practices. Access to the study of experimental movements and concepts were not readily available in the academies at a time when the *avant garde* was just beginning to be tolerated and perhaps not yet quite encouraged. But through the efforts of a handful of artists, many presented here, Spanish Art found a way to realign with the progressive ideas that were developing in the rest of the Art world. Instead of relying on traditional avenues of learning, many created their own creative circles, forming artist groups like the *Dau al Set* in Barcelona and the *El Paso* in Madrid. Many of these artists, a number of them self-taught, also traveled to Paris and even further on to the United States, seeking out the inspiration they would bring back to Spain to develop their own evolved artistic style in line with the tenets of *informalism*, but one which simultaneously honored the great traditions of Spanish art as exemplified by Goya and Velázquez, and therefore ushering an autochthonous Spanish visual language into broader international discourse.

So influential were these creators that by the end of the decade, Spanish Art would become highly recognized and celebrated internationally, with highlights of these successes acknowledged with numerous accolades at important artistic events such as the Biennale of Sao Paulo (1957) and the 29th edition of the Venice Biennale (1958), and the presentation of the seminal exhibition “New Spanish Art” at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1960). Playing an important role in the reopening of Spanish cultural and societal avenues to the rest of the world, these artists had built the bridges that would define new paths for Spanish Art for the generations to come and recognition beyond their regional appreciation.

The works presented in these galleries give an overview of the output of these influential artists beyond the 50's and 60's with works from the following decades, highlighting the creative diversity that developed by means of individual and independent contributions within a unified effort to contemporize Spanish Art.

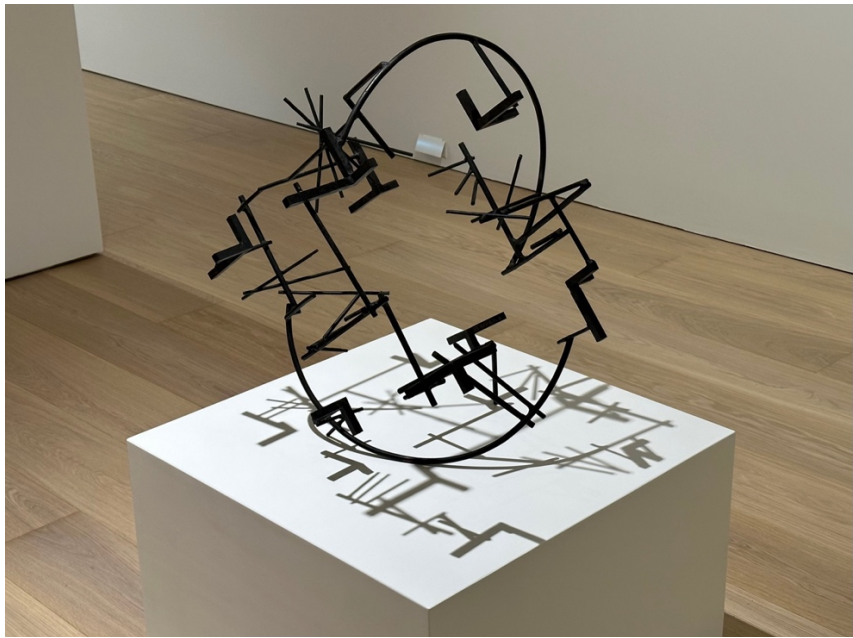
Rooms I and II: El Paso

In 1957, the artists Antonio Saura, Manuel Rivera, Rafael Canogar, Juana Francés, Martín Chirino, Luis Feito, Manuel Millares and Pablo Serrano, along with art critics and artists Manuel Conde and José Ayllón signed a manifesto that defined their activity. Shortly thereafter, Manuel Rivera joined the collective and the following year, Manuel Viola.

El Paso only existed for three years (1957-1960), but it was prolific and influential as a unified force in promoting their cause. And just as its members founded it with their independent styles, they continued their individual creative careers in the decades that followed. (*Artetrama, Madrid, 2015*)

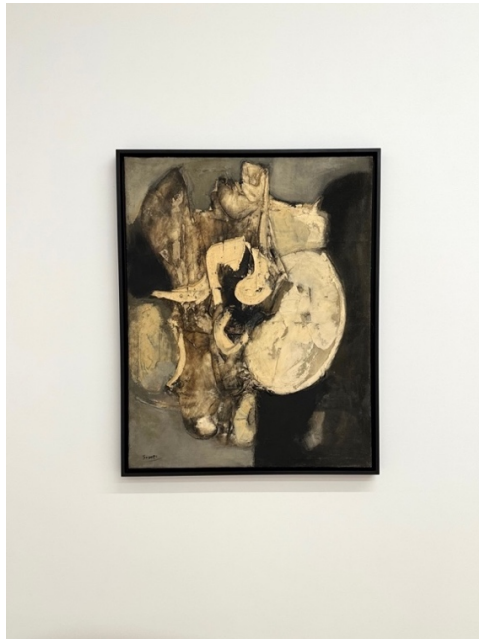
MANIFESTO, Summer, 1957

“El Paso” is an “activity” that aims to create a new state of mind within the Spanish artistic world. “El Paso” was born as a result of the grouping of various painters and writers who, through different paths, have understood the moral need to carry out an action within their country. “El Paso” aims to create an environment that allows the free development of art and the artist, and will fight to overcome the acute crisis that Spain is going through in the field of visual arts (its causes: the lack of museums and collectors, the absence of responsible criticism, the radical separation between the different artistic activities, the artificial solution of artistic emigration, etc.). We believe that our art will not be valid until it contains a concern that coincides with the signs of the time, making a passionate contact with the most innovative artistic trends. We are moving towards a revolutionary art -in which our dramatic tradition and our direct expression are present, which historically responds to a universal activity. Aware of the uselessness of the discussion on the terms “abstraction-figuration”, “constructive-expressionist art”, “collective-individual art”, etc., our purpose is to present an authentic and free work, open to experimentation and research without borders, and not subject to exclusive or limiting fees. We advocate a strong and deep, serious and significant art. We fight for an art towards the salvation of individuality, within the sign of our time. We are heading towards a great plastic transformation in which to find the expression of a “new reality”. And towards an anti-academy, in which the spectator and the artist become aware of their social and spiritual responsibility. The action of “El Paso” will last as long as the aforementioned conditions remain in our country.



Pablo Serrano
(Crivillén, Spain, 1910 – Madrid, Spain, 1985)

In his early years in Spain, Pablo Serrano presented the Irons, sculptures in which he composed waste material (iron, nails, metal mesh ...) that he found or collected in dumps and scrap yards and that he grouped together in space creating abstract shapes, using the assembly technique. A short time later, Serrano reflected on another fundamental theme, space. He started from the occupied space to reach the empty space in sculptures recalling the presence of that which no longer exists, that is, freed from his physical body. These works are marked by the void, by the nothingness that has been generated from gestures in the air or the fire inside the cube. For Serrano, sculpture is a vehicle for ideas and a transmitter of communication. Communicating is a constant desire and sculpture, through matter and form, its language. (*Pablo Serrano, Instituto Aragonés de Arte y Cultura Contemporáneos*)



Antonio Suárez
(Gijón, Spain, 1923 – Madrid, Spain, 2013)

The development of the painter Antonio Suárez towards abstract art is already evident around 1955, when the artist carried out a series of works on paper with which he indicated this direction. Although the monotypes that he executed the following year reaffirmed this, it was not until 1957, with his participation in the foundation of the El Paso group, that his work definitively embraced this new form of expression, revolutionary in the context of postwar Spanish art.

Faced with the gravity and fierceness of the abstract expressionism of his El Paso colleagues, Suárez's work has always been characterized by a search for elegance and chromatic refinement. An intuitive painter, always reluctant to carry out any kind of preparatory study or sketch for his paintings, the work of Antonio Suárez has made play with matter and color, beyond the figurative anecdotes that may sometimes appear in his work, the true center of his work. (*Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias*)



Antonio Saura
(Huesca, Spain, 1930 – Cuenca, Spain, 1998)

Saura was never afraid to deal with what might be called “life’s crucial subjects” in his paintings. On the contrary, he consciously confronted them, finding substance for his work in themes such as death, religion, sex or violence. Formed as a surrealist, Saura’s discovery of the possibilities of action painting coincided with the realization that he was not interested in absolute abstraction. On the contrary, he was interested in the preservation of certain figurative motifs as the foundations of his work.

A great admirer of (Jackson) Pollock, Saura basically learnt two things from American abstract expressionism: the use of very large surfaces that allowed for the total liberation of pictorial expression and a fast and nervous way of applying the paint on the canvas, a technique which in reality had its origin in surrealist automatism.

The other foundation of his working method was traditional Spanish art, through which he acquired a certain darkness in his color range—especially that of well-known, easily-recognizable painters such as El Greco, Juan de Valdés Leal, the Ribera of *Mujer barbuda* [Bearded Woman, 1631] and, above all, Francisco de Goya’s *Pinturas negras* [Black Paintings, 1819–1823]. (*Juan Manuel Bonet, Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, Cuenca, Fundación Juan March, Madrid, 2016*)



Juana Francés

(Alicante, Spain, 1924 – Madrid, Spain, 1990)

In 1945, Juana Francés enrolled in the Real Academia de Artes de San Fernando (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando) in Madrid obtaining her diploma in 1950. Towards the middle of the 1950s, in a change of direction that was as rapid as it was radical, Francés made the move to abstraction. The shift coincides chronologically with that of other Spanish painters of her same generation, such as Tàpies, Cuixart, Saura or Millares, who had begun doing a kind of more or less Miró-style surrealist painting and who during those same years also began producing abstract painting.

In the development of Juana Francés this transitional phase was a brief one. The definitive change came in 1956 when Juana Francés met the sculptor Pablo Serrano with whom she joined the small group who were preparing the creation of the El Paso group. From that moment on her interest was focused exclusively on the international avant-gardes that were emerging with greater strength during those same years: European Informalism and American Abstract Expressionism.

Spanish Informalist painting of those years oscillated between two opposed poles: matter and gesture. Juana Francés was firmly situated in the camp of matter, and she did so with a purity and a radicalness with the rejection of all iconic reference and the concentration on the most extreme tactility. (*“Juana Francés: 1957-1962” (excerpts), Tomàs Llorens Serra, Mayoral Magazine*)



Manolo Millares

(Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, Spain, 1926 – Madrid, Spain, 1972)

Millares played an important role in revamping artistic languages in Spain during the fifties and sixties, both as part of the Canary Island group LADAC (the Archers of Contemporary Art), founded in 1950, and with his participation in the creation of the *El Paso* group (1957-1960).

In 1955, once settled in Madrid, Millares' career started to become tied to exhibiting with and the theories of the *El Paso* groups until the end of the decade. His shift towards Informalism can be seen in his pictorial experimentation with the mediums and aesthetic and expressive qualities of the materials (sackcloth and wooden frames) as they undertook the artistic practice as a process of exorcism from which giving new meaning to technique and materials. The use of sackcloth, sewn, torn and mended to *become* the piece itself, and the use of stripped-down colors – blacks, whites and reds – turn the crisis of the fabric into the only possible support for the painting. The associations of the sacking with a shroud – the idea of the material death of man and his reminiscences (graves and tombs) – became the focal point of his work. (*Manuel Millares – Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, January 9 – March 16, 1992*)



Manuel Viola

(Zaragoza, Spain, 1919 – San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain, 1987)

At the time, Viola was regarded as the most vehement of Spain's abstract expressionists, although in reality he was a far more cultured painter than his boisterous arguments and fondness for folklore might suggest. His paintings contain frequent tributes to the poets, thinkers and mystics of the tradition to which he belonged—in this he differed from his former companions of his French period.

Viola was not satisfied limiting himself to works of a purely introspective nature, as is proven by his incursions into areas where other painters did not dare to venture, such as bullfighting, flamenco, cock fighting or the Cuban Revolution. In this subject he was very Spanish, and even more so in his predilection for a certain color range. The critic José María Moreno Galván described his work as “the ghost of tenebrism, or better still, that of seventeenth-century Spanish realism.” (*Juan Manuel Bonet, Catalog Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, Cuenca, Fundación Juan March, Madrid, 2016*)



Manuel Rivera

(Granada, Spain, 1927 – Madrid, Spain, 1995)

With a strong will to experiment, Manuel Rivera developed a new grammar by using wire mesh as a means of expression, which shortly thereafter became an accepted form of aesthetic medium. His work received early recognition at the Sao Paulo (1957) and Venice (1958) Biennials, exemplifying the triumph of the disintegration of traditional values and painting principles like the use of brushes, canvas, rules of composition, etc.

Rivera's work is based on the relationship between space and light that he created with wires. By increasing the depth of the support, he composed on two planes and implemented his spatial concepts. Utilizing screwed-in pivots enabled him to create additional planes without over filling the surface. It is the light – the optical vibrations that cause a moiré effect and chiaroscuro (light-dark) glazes – that creates the shapes. Despite the three-dimensional effects, Rivera worked without sculptural intensions and insisted that all are derived from the properties of light and material. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)



Rafael Canogar

(Toledo, Spain, 1935 – Madrid, Spain, currently)

After the Spanish Civil War and a period of transition, Rafael Canogar and his family took up residence in Madrid in 1944. He began his training with painter Daniel Vázquez Díaz, with whom he mastered a figurative language inspired by the work of Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró. In 1954, Canogar began to experiment with abstraction and informalism, motivated by Michel Tapié's call for a collective art phenomenon. His canvases, increasingly monochromatic, sought to achieve a balance between form and matter, between formal and informal painting. (*TATE, Sofia Gotti, September 2015*)



Luis Feito
(Madrid, Spain, 1929)

Luis Feito began his formal training at the Escuela superior de bellas artes de San Fernando (now Real academia de bellas artes de San Fernando), Madrid, in 1950. He worked briefly in a figurative style before he discovered Cubism, but in 1954 he presented his first solo show of nonfigurative works. Thereafter, Feito remained committed to painting in an abstract mode.

In 1953, Feito relocated to Paris where he resided for nearly 25 years. While in Paris, he had the opportunity to view work by his international contemporaries and became acquainted with several Art Informel artists. He was also introduced to automatism and began to incorporate other materials, most notably sand, into his paintings. Feito nonetheless maintained close contact with the Spanish avant-garde and was a founding member of the Madrid-based group El Paso. (*Guggenheim Museum*)



Martín Chirino

(Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 1925 – Madrid, Spain, 2019)

Martín Chirino's career began in the 1950's. Heir to the Spanish sculptural avant-garde of the first half of the twentieth century, following the tradition initiated by Julio González and Pablo Gargallo, he adds his particular interest in Aboriginal Canarian culture (Guanche).

Chirino's work is based on two principles: wrought iron; the main material used in his sculptures, and the spiral; a symbol and formal solution recurring throughout his career. Here the foundations of his work have been synthesized: the notion of folding and unfolding, the horizontal and vertical formation in space and the curvature of material that, in his hands becomes pliable, resuscitating the tradition of forging. Chirino's sculptural production develops and is grouped chronologically according to specific intentions, the references of which are always and ultimately found in nature and the real world, focusing on them for extended periods of time until he exhausts all of their expressive possibilities. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)

Room III: Dau al Set, Grupo Silex, and independent movements

Dau al Set

Preceding the movement of art towards Informalism, the Dau al Set (1948-1953) was founded in Barcelona in 1948 by young artists open to French and universal trends. The initial figures were the poet Joan Brossa and the painter Joan Ponç, who were joined by Arnau Puig, Tàpies, Tharrats, Cuixart and the writer Juan Eduardo Cirlot. They proposed to link with the surrealism what had been interrupted by the civil war, and the figure that served as an example for all of them was Joan Miró.

They recognized the influence of Klee, Max Ernst and Picabia and were in line with magical surrealism. They did not have a manifesto, but they created a magazine also called Dau al Set, which was their means of expression. They dedicated their works to these artists; Dalí, Magritte, Francis Picabia, dadaism, psychoanalysis or magic. Through it they promoted artistic and cultural renewal. The group played a major role in bringing the vanguard forward and paved the way for Informalism in Spain. (*Arte España*)



Antoni Tàpies
(Barcelona, Spain, 1923 – 2012)

Tàpies began his successful career in Barcelona closely linked to Catalan surrealism, but in 1950 he left for Paris and entered fully into *Informalism*, starting to paint in a very material style, incorporating recycled objects and detritus, with strings, papers, sand, straw or marble dust being typical. For this reason, Tàpies' paintings are almost like bas-reliefs.

Among his main influences were Nietzsche, Catalonia and Buddhism, which served in some way to create his impressive compositions that would almost become like walls on which signs (crosses, moons, asterisks, letters, numbers, geometric figures) could be distinguished. The colors of his works are usually austere, cold or earthy.

Another characteristic of Tàpies' work is that of a rapid and conscious destruction. This decomposition is a perfect reflection on the passage of time. (*Miguel Calvo Santos, 09-27-2016*)



Joan Brossa
(Barcelona, Spain, 1919 – 1998)

A libertarian poet, critical, defiant, Joan Brossa has produced a body of work that transcends classification. Time and again in books, exhibitions and stage works, his pieces have fired direct shots into the conscience of the spectator, while critics and curators have often tiptoed around the transcendence of the message. *Nogueras Blanchard (excerpt)*

“Of the books with Tàpies, it is worth highlighting “*Novel·la*” (1965), a book dominated by Brossa’s argument – the biography of an anonymous man who makes himself known by his bureaucratic documents – and the existential narrative that gives him the treatment of the thirty-one lithographs by Antoni Tàpies from an informal poetics, with ripped, torn, holed pages, and a bundle of string on the cover, like a bundle of newsprint.” *Manuel Guerrero, “Brossa or the poetic revolt”, Fundació Joan Miró, 2001*



Joan-Josep Tharrats

(Girona, Spain, 1918 – Barcelona, Spain, 2001)

Joan-Josep Tharrats studied at the Escola Massana, Barcelona, in the mid-thirties, before the Civil War. After almost four years compulsory military service, in 1942 he resumed his artistic activity. Initially close to Impressionism, he quickly gravitated toward abstraction. In the late 1940s, he founded the innovative group *Dau al Set* and the homonymous magazine, alongside Joan Brossa, Modest Cuixart, Joan Ponç, Arnau Puig and Antoni Tàpies. Together they championed the artistic avant-garde at the height of the Franco regime, and a good part of the magazine *Dau al Set* was printed on the press in his own studio. Tharrats was leader of the Catalan avant-garde in the post-war period with an oeuvre that evolved from a linear abstraction derived from Surrealism to a textured, colourful and free-form Informalism. (*Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona*)



Modest Cuixart

(Barcelona, Spain, 1925 – Palafrugell, Spain, 2007)

Self-taught, Cuixart's early paintings are the result of a fertile dreamlike imagination and experimentation in parallel worlds. They were meticulously drawn and included a keen sense of symbology. In the mid-fifties, with his stays in Paris and Lyon, he gravitated towards Informalism, exploring textures and reliefs, and new materials such as gold pigments, silver and metal emulsions, using new techniques such as drip painting. (*Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona*)

Grupo Sílex

The Grupo Sílex was formed at the end of 1955 with some former members of Inter Nos (Alcoy and Hernández Pijuan) and the painters Planell, Rovira Brull, and Ll. Terricabras. They did not have a specific aesthetic and they did not launch theoretical proposals, they simply insisted on the connection of contemporary art with primitive art and, at some point, they began to insist on expressionism and abstraction. The group made many exhibitions and established connections, although it was not until 1957 that they exhibited in Barcelona. (*"The Artistic Politics of Francoism: The Milestone of the Hispano-American Biennial: Post-war Spanish Art"*, Miguel Cabañas Bravo (excerpt))



Joan Hernández Pijuan
(Barcelona, Spain, 1931 – 2005)

Joan Hernández Pijuan studied at the Escola d'Arts i Oficis de la Llotja and the Escola de Belles Arts, Barcelona, and in 1957 moved to Paris, where he studied engraving and lithography at the École des Beaux-Arts. His early work was close to gestural expressionism, but soon after he adopted a geometric figuration dominated by color fields and by the presence of solitary objects such as fruit, glasses, eggs and scissors. (*Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona*)



Carlos Planell Viñals
(Barcelona, 1927 – 2008)

An autodidact, he began his work in art around 1948, and until 1954 he remained interested in figuration. At the end of that year, he was introduced to abstract language and in 1955, together with the artists Alcoy, Hernández Pijuan, Rovira-Brull and Terri, he founded the Grupo Sílex. Around 1957-1958, his abstract painting entered a serene and personal informalism in which he united matter and painting. Later, he incorporated various elements such as rope, rice, etc, in his paintings, and later introduced perforations on the canvas as an essential expressive factor. (*Real Academia de la Historia*)

Abstract thinkers

Although much emphasis is put on the importance of the formation of artist collectives in the development of Spanish art towards Informalist aesthetics, one cannot overlook the notable contributions of Luis Gordillo, Francisco Ferreras, Lucio Muñoz, César Manrique and Esteban Vicente, who have been equally influential independent of these early connections.



Gustavo Torner
(Cuenca, Spain, 1925)

Torner belongs to the so-called Cuenca group which emerged in the 1950s and is close to artists from the El Paso group, and exemplifies the possibility of an art that never abandons the reference to the real world as motive and foundation, from an apparently plastic abstract vocabulary. In all of his works, a strong sense of construction and spatial composition dominates since he starts from the idea of collage to elevate it to that of assemblage. At the foundation of this artistic concept is his desire to rethink the physical essence of the work of art and to give meaning to each fragment of which the work of art is made up.

In his paintings, since the late fifties, along with oil he has used other non-artistic materials (sand, feldspar, hemp, latex, aluminum). He creates a rigid compositional structure in his paintings by dividing the pictorial surface into two fields; in the upper, a larger portion, he develops a color field; in the lower, he concentrates on material experimentation and exhausts the expressive resources of the materials used. Both for the processes and for the incorporation of chunks of reality into his work, Torner approaches the international currents of Informalism and New Realism. “*Gustavo Torner: Retrospective 1949-1991*”, 1991, *Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía* (excerpt)



Francisco Farreras
(Barcelona, Spain, 1927)

We will never find in Farreras' work the automatism underlying the abstract work of former surrealist painters nor the *Generation of '98's* violent passion for history. His is a subtle, carefully constructed pictorial world in which almost nothing happens and in which nothing is organized in plastic terms. As far as Farreras is concerned, "new materials" were simply a launching pad towards the more balanced art of collage. In 1959, he discovered the plastic possibilities of silk paper, which became the principal element of his work from then on. (*Juan Manuel Bonet, Catálogo Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, Cuenca (excerpt), Fundación Juan March, Madrid, 2016*)



Lucio Muñoz
(Madrid, Spain, 1929 – 1998)

Lucio Muñoz belongs to a generation of Spanish artists from the Fifties and is considered one of the pioneers of abstraction in Spain. The artist started out working with landscape, a prevalent genre at the time in Spain, particularly among those considered disciples of Benjamín Palencia. In 1955, Muñoz' first semi-abstract paintings are exhibited with visible influences of Paul Klee, Rufino Tamayo, Ben Nicholson and Joaquín Torres García, among others.

In Paris, he declared his firm commitment to Abstract Expressionism, and on his return to Spain defined his established style and work, securing his place among the Spanish avant-garde. An Informalist aesthetic takes a firm foothold in Lucio Muñoz's work via the amalgamation of traditional materials with other more non-habitual ones such as soil, paper and cardboard. His most decisive years are 1958 and 1959 when he starts to explore the expressive potential of wood, a material traditionally considered non-pictorial, working with plywood in particular which he unsystematically carves, scratches, burns and chips. His far-reaching influences in this period include Francisco de Goya's black paintings, Diego de Velázquez, Gregorian chants, Castilla, flamenco and Alberto Durer's engravings. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)



Fernando Zóbel (Manila, Philippines, 1924 – Rome, Italy, 1984)

Of Spanish nationality, although born in the Philippines, Fernando Zóbel trained and developed his work in countries as diverse and distant from each other as the United States, the Philippines and Spain. In the latter he settled definitively in 1961, founding the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art in the city of Cuenca, which constituted an important intellectual and artistic nucleus of the post-war Spanish avant-garde.

Thus, diverse influences such as American informalism, Spanish abstract expressionism or oriental calligraphy converge in Fernando Zóbel. All of them had a decisive role in the consolidation of the style and technique that Fernando Zóbel developed starting in 1956. It is at that moment when the artist fully commits to abstract art, eliminating the superfluous from his paintings, and capturing the traces that the observed reality left in his calm mind. (*Galería Cayón*)



César Manrique

(Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, 1919 – 1992)

César Manrique was born in Arrecife, Lanzarote, an island on which his art was to leave an indelible mark. After finishing his studies at the San Fernando Fine Arts Academy at Madrid (where he lived from 1945 to 1964), he exhibited his work on a regular basis both in Spain and abroad. In the early nineteen fifties, he ventured into non-figurative art and studied the properties of matter, concerns that would predominate in his compositions, bonding him to Spain's contemporary *Informalist* movement. (*Fundación César Manrique*)



Esteban Vicente

(Segovia, Spain, 1903 – New York, USA, 2001)

In 1921, Vicente enrolled in the Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid with the intention of becoming a sculptor, but he soon decided to devote himself to painting. His Madrid period is marked by his contact and friendship with writers and artists such as García Lorca, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Alberti, Luis Buñuel, Juan Bonafé, Boreas and the Pole Wladislaw Jahl. His esthetic proposals mark him as a member of the group later classified as the “painter-poets”, in that their work was the artistic counterpart of the group of poets known as the Generation of 1927. In fact, he published his first drawings in two literary reviews: Verso y Prosa and Mediodía.

In 1940 he became an American citizen and then began a period of creative crisis that would lead to his encounter with Abstract Expressionism. In his dialogue with it over a period of two decades, Esteban Vicente gradually consolidated his own uniquely personal style, based on vibrant chromatic harmonies on top of vaguely geometric structures, sometimes evocative of inner landscapes. The exploration of these channels brought him the friendship of members of the New York School. (*Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente, Segovia (excerpts)*)



Luis Gordillo

(Seville, Spain, 1934 – Madrid, Spain, currently)

Luis Gordillo started his career during the fifties when he travelled to Paris and got acquainted with the European art of the time, in particular with artists such as Wols, Dubuffet, Michaux and Fautrier. In his first works, the influence of surrealism and Tàpies can be appreciated to which an early seventies Pop art associated iconography would be incorporated in later years. (*Galería Joan Prats*)

Room IV: The Sculptors

The legacy the Spanish sculptors of this period have left continues to be of great importance and influence to Spanish art today, deeply ingrained in contemporary visual language.



Julio González

(Barcelona, Spain, 1876 – Arcueil, France, 1942)

Julio González is considered the father of iron sculpture and one of the key artists in the development of twentieth-century art. González, with an artistic vocation, trained as a craftsman in his father's artistic metalwork workshop in a modernist Barcelona, where he learned how to forge and cast iron. His move to Paris influenced his artistic production. There he learned industrial technique, autogenous welding, which was decisive for the subsequent renewal of his iron sculptural language. The artist experimented on the two-dimensional plane with his embossed reliefs and the exploration of volume until in 1928 Picasso, used to working with metal, asked for his help. In producing a memorial to his friend Apollinaire with transparent and emptied forms, in order to materialize the idea of "a solid statue of nothing", inspired by *The Poet Assassinated* written by Apollinaire in 1914. Thanks to this collaboration, González's advice to Picasso allowed him to test the feasibility of his sketches, while Picasso gave his friend the impetus to develop his work based on the synthetic capacity of the drawing. González's sculptures, until then limited to delicate iron and small dimensions, are reinforced to the point of becoming imposing and complex figures that would lead him to be internationally recognized. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)



Jorge Oteiza
(Orio, Spain, 1908 – San Sebastián, Spain, 2003)

Oteiza's sculptures examine the relationship between volume and space brought about by early avant-garde movements, particularly Constructivism, whilst also sharing a distinct penchant for abstraction, spirituality and humanism with other artists. In 1935, he traveled to Latin America, where he exhibited in various cities while also working as a teacher and carrying out research into Pre-Columbian sculpture.

Following his return to Spain in 1948, he embarked upon the ongoing experimentation with what he himself defined as "*the aesthetic nature of the Statue as a purely spatial organism*" whilst also tackling the sculptures of the Sanctuary of Aránzazu, an enormous project planned in 1953 and carried out between 1968 and 1969. In this project, religious motives are depersonalized, the figures emptied, but as they open out into space they become full of spiritual content. Between 1958 and 1959, he conveyed the previous formulations in his work; for instance, the emptiness of the cube in his *Cajas vacías*, perhaps the best representation of the conclusions from his experimentation. From these conclusions, he developed new essays that culminated in his pre-minimalist compositions. During this period, he also associated the void found in his work with the cromlechs from Basque prehistory, and, as he reaches the experimental conclusion that, '*it is no longer possible to add sculpture, as expression, either to man or the city*', Oteiza relinquished his sculptural work.

In the Sixties he focused on aesthetic and linguistic research, particularly Basque culture, and became actively involved in the political and social cause. He later returned to sculpture between 1972 and 1975. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)



Eduardo Chillida
(San Sebastián, Spain, 1924 – 2002)

With a varied and pioneering practice that spans small-scale sculpture, plaster work, drawing, engraving and collage, Spanish artist Eduardo Chillida is best known for his prominent monumental public sculptures, mostly displayed in Spain, Germany, France and the USA. Throughout his career, Chillida drew on his Spanish heritage combined with a fascination for organic form, as well as influences from European and Eastern philosophies, poetry and history, to develop an artistic voice that communicated and resonated with a continent undergoing rapid transformation.

Chillida was born in San Sebastian, Spain in 1924. He conducted preliminary studies to enroll in architecture at the University of Madrid before turning his attention to drawing which he studied at Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid. In 1948 Chillida was awarded a scholarship to attend the Cité Internationale Universitaire and travelled to Paris. On his return to Spain in 1951, he began experimenting in materials that resonated with the Basque region's industrial heritage such as iron, wood and steel. Chillida settled in Hernani and, in 1952, he set up an iron foundry, learning techniques from a local blacksmith. During this period, he continued to make engravings and collages and this core practice was to continue throughout his career, allowing him to explore form and line by cutting into paper. This technique arose from the concept of the collage in the mid 1980s (gravitations did not replace collages) by a new development, 'Gravitaciones' (Gravitations), in which Chillida eliminated the adhesive from his collage, allowing the work to be suspended in space. (*Hauser & Wirth*)



Martín Chirino

(Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 1925 – Madrid, Spain, 2019)

Martín Chirino's career began in the 1950's. Heir to the Spanish sculptural avant-garde of the first half of the twentieth century, following the tradition initiated by Julio González and Pablo Gargallo, he adds his particular interest in Aboriginal Canarian culture (Guanche).

Chirino's work is based on two principles: wrought iron; the main material used in his sculptures, and the spiral; a symbol and formal solution recurring throughout his career. Here the foundations of his work have been synthesized: the notion of folding and unfolding, the horizontal and vertical formation in space and the curvature of material that, in his hands becomes pliable, resuscitating the tradition of forging. Chirino's sculptural production develops and is grouped chronologically according to specific intentions, the references of which are always and ultimately found in nature and the real world, focusing on them for extended periods of time until he exhausts all of their expressive possibilities. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)

Contemporary Spanish Art

This portion of the exhibition picks up where we are left off with “Spanish Art of the mid-20th century” presented in the galleries on the main floor. Here we focus on the work of Spanish artists from the generations after, following some of the trajectories of Spanish art from the 1980’s to the present.

Although no definable and unified artistic style has developed as a direct lineage to their predecessors’, one can argue that the great legacy passed on to the artists of our time is the bridge they built between the historical and the new, and between the indigenous and the foreign. The openness to the influences of broader international styles and concepts ranging from Pop Art and Minimalism to performative and Land Art, enveloped in a strong respect for traditions held within Spanish art history continues to be evident in many of the contemporary work we see today. As a result, we observe an incredible diversity in the way Spanish visual language continues to evolve, a reflection of the continued connection of Spanish artistic practices and thought to those of the rest of the world.

Rooms V and VI: Pushing the boundaries of painting



Luis Gordillo

(Seville, Spain, 1934 – Madrid, Spain, currently)

The work of Luis Gordillo spans more than five decades. He began his career by developing a new pictorial language that became a point of reference for an entire generation of artists who were beginning to search for ways to distance themselves from prevailing Informalist and Conceptual tendencies. His work forged a new path for the context of Spanish art in the second half of the 1960s with the treatment of figuration in dialogue with abstraction and in tune with Pop Art, experimentation with photography, multiplication of dissociated images in series, imagery from media related material, or the use of advertising and comics.

Since the early 1980s, Luis Gordillo has primarily made works in series wherein he gesturally applies paint on ever-broader spaces, demonstrating his obsession with repetition, fragmentation and compartmentalization. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)



Esteban Vicente

(Segovia, Spain, 1903 – New York, USA, 2001)

In 1921, Vicente enrolled in the Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid with the intention of becoming a sculptor, but he soon decided to devote himself to painting. His Madrid period is marked by his contact and friendship with writers and artists such as García Lorca, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Alberti, Luis Buñuel, Juan Bonafé, Boreas and the Pole Wladislaw Jahl. His esthetic proposals mark him as a member of the group later classified as the “painter-poets”, in that their work was the artistic counterpart of the group of poets known as the Generation of 1927. In fact, he published his first drawings in two literary reviews: Verso y Prosa and Mediodía.

In 1940 he became an American citizen and then began a period of creative crisis that would lead to his encounter with Abstract Expressionism. In his dialogue with it over a period of two decades, Esteban Vicente gradually consolidated his own uniquely personal style, based on vibrant chromatic harmonies on top of vaguely geometric structures, sometimes evocative of inner landscapes. The exploration of these channels brought him the friendship of members of the New York School. (*Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente, Segovia (excerpts)*)



Joan Hernández Pijuan
(Barcelona, Spain, 1931 – 2005)

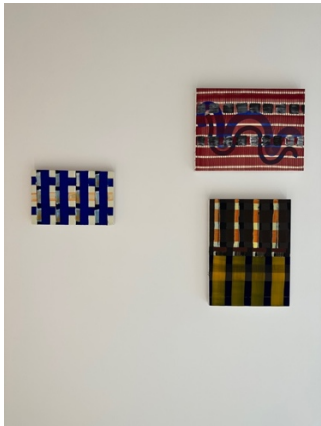
Color strips, tonal gradation, transparencies, textures and resonant light are all elements that typify the artist's work, which in the eighties incorporated elements such as the profile of a cypress, the furrows of the plough or the shape of a leaf, without ever abandoning abstraction. In the late eighties, Hernández Pijuan returned to Informalism, eventually developing a style of painting characterized exclusively by the use of a black-and-white palette. Atmospheric though austere, the work becomes an exercise in spirituality and inner contemplation. He also continued his work as a printmaker, producing carefully executed, monochromatic grids in series. (*Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona*)



Carmen Calvo
(Valencia, Spain, 1950)

Calvo is one of the leaders in contemporary conceptualization of the fragment. Interested in archaeology, her work has an essence of discovery and reminiscence. The diversity of materials used in the creation of her work is one of her most personal traits. Items that have been found or purchased from the Madrid markets together with materials like cement, marble, glass, clay, plaster and a long list of others are part of her compositions that have been renovated over the decades into an evolution that led her to represent Spain in the Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 1997 along with the Catalan Joan Brossa.

Resonances, seen by the artist as direct influences of Kurt Schwitters and Joseph Cornell, are appreciated in the use of what is objectual, the tendency to accumulate and the rhythmic repetition present in her pieces which often incorporates humor. Convergence of the surreal object, the decontextualization of Dadá and the sobriety of Arte Povera meet in her creations. (*"Carmen Calvo"* (excerpt), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2002)



Juan Uslé

(Santander, Spain, 1954 – New York, USA and Saro, Spain, currently)

Juan Uslé's paintings are based on his urban experience, particularly New York, where he moved in the late eighties. Visual perception, liquid – for its mobility and fluidity – light structures and spaces greatly influence him, bringing forth a combination of geometric and organic elements in his compositions.

In his work, Juan Uslé mixes his own colors and applies them on canvas by a process of dispersion, building abstract images from geometric patterns, light and color. In each of his compositions he combines the search for organization and structure with the appearance of the unexpected.

The paintings of Juan Uslé analyze rather than express the origin of his own images. His practice is based on the interplay between formal opposites, and therefore can be defined as having opposing dynamics. (*Galería Joan Prats, Barcelona*)



Elena del Rivero

(Valencia, Spain, 1949 – New York, NY, USA, currently)

Elena del Rivero is a multidisciplinary artist who works in paint and paper. Her inspiration comes from everyday life and what is at hand. Her projects develop slowly, constructing visual narratives that are completed with carefully selected titles that favor double understood.

Since the early 1990s, Del Rivero's work has continued to focus on repairing damaged works, intentionally or not, in the process of making them. The initial impression the work makes may suggest that it is autobiographical. Covered by a veil of poetic ambiguity, Elena del Rivero has chosen never to explicitly reveal details of her life. Instead, her work acknowledges certain historical experiences and events that she has witnessed over the years. (*Galería Travesía Cuatro*)



Prudencio Irazabal

(Puentelarrá-Álava, Spain, 1954 – Madrid, Spain, currently)

The relation between surface and depth becomes vital for the understanding of Prudencio Irazabal's abstract images. Color, mediated by the transit of light through paper thin layers, constitutes in his works a unique perceptual experience. This merging of translucent layers shapes the incoming light but allows the eye to traverse them through to the white canvas. Since there is never a fixed distance between the moving eye and the specific layering in a particular spot, the precise location of color remains always unclear. His paintings are transparent and open, but while offering dense surfaces of radiating colors and deep spaces, they also conceal all traces of gesture and evidence of process that suggests anything beyond paint.

Irazabal's paintings are defined at once by extreme luminosity and the emotional intensity of a complex color devoid of narrative and symbolism. They keep an ongoing challenge to unite the certainty of materiality with the unreliable nature of perception in order to synthesize image, materiality and meaning in the timeless effort to paint the things that cannot be painted. (*Galería Helga de Alvear*)



Alejandro Gornemann

(Madrid, Spain, 1964 – Denia, Spain, currently)

Working with abstraction requires a considerable restriction on the range of expressive possibilities existing in the field of painting, and above all considering the richness and complexity existing in many artistic manifestations today. A formalist investigation of painting without a minimal conceptual approach lacks content and expressiveness. This approach can manifest itself in multiple ways, especially when painting becomes a means of “illustrating” “extra-pictorial” ideas.

Basically, I am interested in this work to develop an investigation of painting on painting and exclusively with painting. At the moment I am not interested in using narrative or conceptual resources (other than formal painting issues) to complement or reinforce the meaning of the paintings. For this reason, they are paintings without titles, lacking figurative references, and which only begin to say something when the viewer is able to decipher the ins and outs of formal investigation. – *(Alejandro Gornemann)*

Rooms VII and VIII: Returning to classical references - the still life and landscape



Miguel Ángel Campano
(Madrid, Spain, 1948 – 2018)

The tension between abstraction and figuration and the contrast between starkness and fullness form decisive experimental components in Campano's work. To achieve this stylistic fragmentation, Campano refers to pictorial tradition and uses certain themes and works of French painters such as Eugène Delacroix, Nicolas Poussin and Paul Cézanne as a point of departure. With these elements, Campano embarks on the construction of a radicalized aesthetic in which certain energetic lines of Minimalist tradition and the gestural variants of Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell converge, along with allusions to past avant-garde movements linked to Constructivism and Suprematism.

Campano's work became a site for experimentation and privileged transgression that permanently questioned painting from within painting itself. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)



José María Sicilia
(Madrid, Spain, 1954)

The poetic line present throughout the artist's work transcends the lyrical, as Sicilia has consistently delved into studying the problems of vision more thoroughly since the beginning of his career. The search for the "heart" of the painting through a dialogue between the bottom and the surface, the use of light as a defining element of that relationship and the image as a vehicle of emotion and tension, and his capability to structure the space of the color are some of the characteristic features of his work.

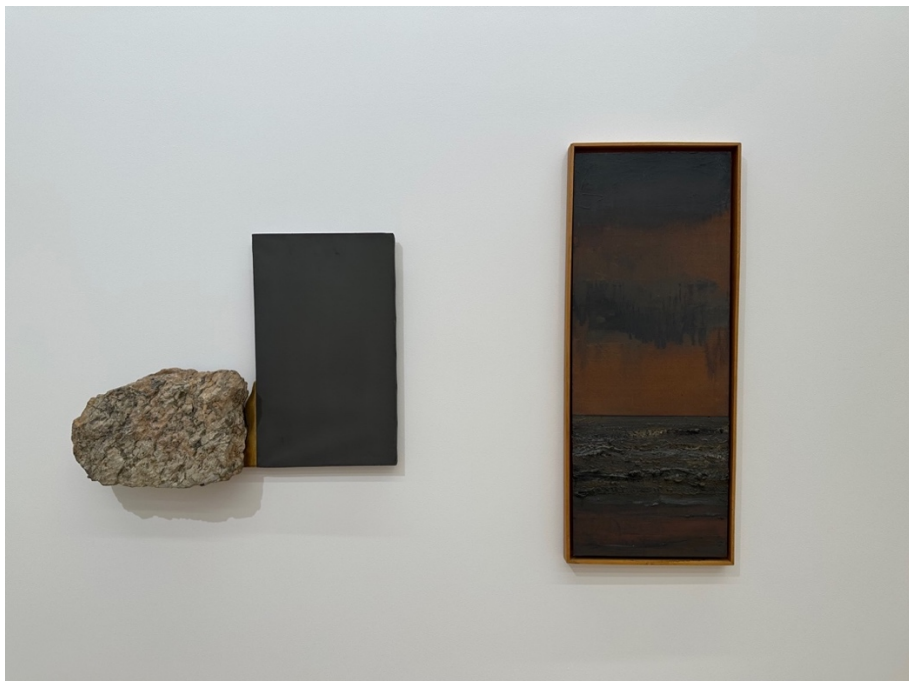
The flower as an object and subject of his paintings has accompanied him throughout his career since the works he made in New York in the Eighties. At the beginning, flowers materially and gesturally represented themselves, but they have evolved over the years, going through various stages. (*"Sicilia in Silos" (excerpts), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2000*)



Miquel Barceló

(Felanitx, Mallorca, Spain, 1957 – Paris, France, currently)

In 1972, Miquel Barceló moved to Palma to study at the Escuela de Artes y Oficios (Decorative Arts School). Two years later he had his first solo exhibition at the Casa de Cultura (Centre for Culture) in Manacor. In the mid-seventies he moved to Barcelona to study at the Fine Arts School. Disappointed by the school, he left prematurely to follow his own artistic path. He began to paint, applying the paint in thick layers, and subjecting it to a variety of processes. It was this technique that became an essential element in his work and allowed him to explore his fascination with the behavior of matter and decomposition. (*Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, Paris*)



Perejaume
(Sant Pol de Mar, Spain, 1957)

Perejaume, a self-taught artist, began his artistic career in the late 1960s with clear influences from the historical vanguards, although over time he has become a heterogeneous artist engaged with constant experimentation in different languages.

His work is the union of literary and visual practices, many of which are based on the theme of territory, with a frequent obsession – as he himself acknowledges – in the concept of “surface”, seen as a place, a base on which to fasten things, but also on the importance of the presence of man as part of the landscape – “The presence of humans in the world is definitive in a way that it has never been before”, the artist asserts. Painting, sculpture, photography, installations, performances, video, intervention in nature and above all writing and walking have contributed to making his work, which is full of metaphors between his walks and the act of writing, redefine the concept of landscape. (*Fundació Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma*)



César Manrique

(Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, 1919 – 1992)

Despite the artist's abstraction and matter-centrism, the plastic roots of his pictorial production lie in Lanzarote's volcanic landscape, transformed into a sort of non-realist naturalism which, rather than a copy of the original, is an emotional translation of its significance. "I try to be the free hand that forms geology," he wrote.

In 1964, he moved to New York. The direct contact with American abstract expressionism, pop art, new sculpture and kinetic art afforded Manrique a visual culture essential to his subsequent creative development.

In the mid-nineteen sixties, upon his return to his native island, he undertook a series of spatial and landscape artistic projects that were not only entirely new at the time, but constituted a statement of his plastic and ethical principles. These actions and interventions aimed to turn the landscape and the island's natural attractions to something of value, with a goal of generating a new international image and portrayal that would form part of Lanzarote's adaptation to a tourist economy. (*Fundación César Manrique*)



Guillem Nadal
(Mallorca, Spain, 1957)

In his constant exploration, Nadal proposes cartographies without beginning or end that place the viewer in front of the abyss. The journey is the common thread of these pieces that originate from experimental places of transition. The trip, as an experience and as a metaphor, is a trace that connects with memory; a sediment that invites introspection. Thus, the canvases, tables and papers constitute unique elements of a labyrinth through which to enter. In the works, Guillem Nadal heeds the indications that Kavafis offered in the poem “Ithaca” and “asks that the road be long”. (*Galería Álvaro Alcázar*)



Gonzalo González
(Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, 1952)

Solitary and bare branches, isolated gardens, flowers without petals, wooden cacti, enamel leaves or aluminum clouds appear in his proposal referring to nature. And it is so as Gonzalo González is an artist who has approached nature through culture. However, (Ramiro) Carrillo explained, “he does not paint landscapes because he is interested in nature, but paints landscapes because he is interested in painting.”

In this sense, he clarified that “landscape painting (and sculpture, drawing, poetry and music) is interesting because it translates the experience of nature into language, that makes us think that the same experience of nature that we have is also something artificial, cultural. The ways in which the human being relates to the environment are cultural, learned ways. When we talk about nature we are talking about many things, and those things have a lot to do with human discourses and little to do with what nature, by itself, is. Gonzalo González is interested in all these types of discourses, especially those that have been developed in art through the practice of landscape”. (“*Gonzalo González, Estar aquí es todo*”, 2019, *Tenerife Espacio de las Artes*, Ramiro Carrillo, curator)



Armando
(Gijón, 1928 – 2002)

Armando was a self-taught artist from Asturias who graduated as an industrial and chemical engineer. Brought up during the Civil War without a mother or a father figure, he was very close to his older brother, who opened an art gallery in the city of Gijón. At the age of 28 he was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, which, years later, made it impossible for him to return to his post in the steel mill where he worked. He was given a disability pension which allowed him to dedicate more time to his two main passions: painting and music. Up until this point, his artistic interests had focused on natural landscapes, depictions of secular architecture and still lives.

Subjected to electroshock treatment and questionable psychiatric therapies like insulin coma therapy, Armando started to distort the representational field which he had stuck to as a figurative painter, simplifying the forms to the most basic levels of painting. Between the late-1950s and the 90s, this broad-ranging body of work incorporated the presence of man in the world as a central reference: compassion between humans, protection of the environment and animals as well as our relationship with other beings in the galaxy. While it is true that many of his personal notes and sketchpads speak of revelations of superior beings who warn him about impending world catastrophes, his painting is circumscribed to the purely descriptive scope of celestial phenomena, almost like a natural historian. These phenomena reside in an area of ‘unsayability’ in which we will never know for sure whether they are stars, planets or moons, or whether what looks like a flying object is, in fact, the product of human engineering, fantastic imagination or extra-terrestrial intelligence. *The Goma*



Miguel Ángel Blanco
(Madrid, Spain, 1958)

Nature is Miguel Ángel Blanco's field of work. His most important artistic and vital project, *Biblioteca del bosque*, began in 1985, consisting of box-books containing natural elements -botanical minerals, animals, entomologies- sealed with glass, preceded by a few pages introducing us to these materials through drawings, prints or photographs. For the artist, box-books are microcosms, new landscapes that express nature in all its phenomenology and in all its geographical and symbolic extension. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)

Room IX: Collage - layering material and historical references



Sara Ramo

(Madrid, Spain, 1975 – São Paulo, Brazil, currently)

Sara Ramo works directly with the elements that define immediate daily life in order to reconfigure them into strange and foreign presences. The alteration of the natural order of things is not a simple formal exercise, for the artist this represents the possibility to create new structures of sensitivity. Ramo participates in a vast heritage from a cultural tradition that has confronted the utilitarian and scientific perspective of the modern world; incorporating notions from mysticism, mythology and magic, the artist questions the relationship between human beings and objects that are only determined by utility. Fracturing this paradigm, new narrative possibilities emerge, involving spatial and temporal consequences.

In *Labour or The Game of Life*, Sara Ramo invites us to be active spectators and to make our own connections, joining dots and clues that we encounter walking through the gallery spaces. From a list of 72 questions, in this scenario or game board the artist regroups previous works, new works, works to be done, gestures and stumbles. There are concerns and occupations that are part of any artist's life. In this case, Sara questions the economy and the production of works, as well as the ways to generate meaning in an increasingly complex context. (*"Labour or The Game of Life"*, 2022, *Travesía Cuatro*, Madrid)



Miki Leal
(Sevilla, Spain, 1974)

Leal is known, above all, for his large-format paintings on paper, but also for his installations, prints or ceramics, which help create a particular and theatrical atmosphere, allowing different open narrative lines.

The artist defines his work method as anarchic since he begins with a very basic sketch, then writes the work as if it were a script to start from a blank canvas, on which he paints from back to front, in layers with very thin paint. That produce glazes that give the work a different personality.

Still lifes, portraits, still lifes, landscapes or the history of design are questioned or highlighted, explicitly or implicitly, forming his personal universe through his own pictorial language, also called Mykitology.

Miki Leal's works recreate a theatrical atmosphere between figuration and abstraction, creating a narrative atmosphere that invites one to enter an imaginary world, sometimes making autobiographical references, where the viewer is invited to travel through the details of the work. (*"Gente Conocida / Derecho a Entrar"*, 2020 (excerpt), *Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Málaga*)



Kiko Pérez

(Vigo, Spain, 1982 – Madrid, Spain, currently)

Kiko Pérez is a Galician artist trained in the Basque sculpture tradition. His wallpapers are conceived as painting, but in them the slightly sculptural character is essential, of construction in layers and apprehension of the de-constructed reality from the associative point of view of color and composition. The author's attention to the production of objects of all kinds, their structure and functional design, are necessary when making his pieces within the framework of the art system. (*"Makulatur / Kiko Pérez, 2015"*, (excerpt) *Cristina Anglada, nosotros-art*)

The artist seems to have decided and selected little, and although the opposite has actually happened, the feeling is precisely that. Behind a patina of immediacy, in the work resides a deep charge of reflection; the decision is the work itself, the contrast and the fabric that line by line, collage after collage and paper after paper establishes a disorder of norms, modes and categories. (*Galería Heinrich Erhardt, Madrid*)

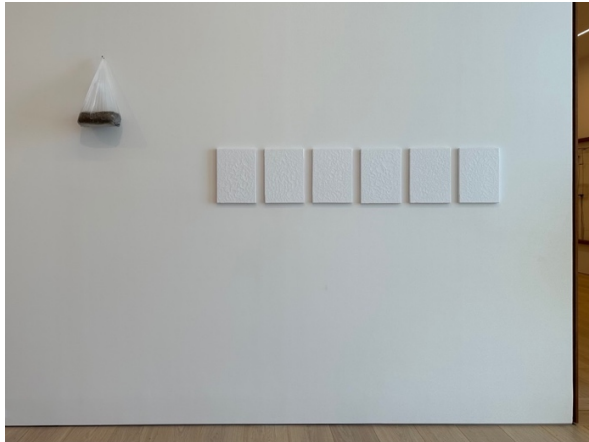


Secundino Hernández
(Madrid, Spain, 1975)

Secundino Hernández's diverse and energetic painting practice resists easy characterization. His paintings deftly combine representation and abstraction, linear draughtsmanship and coloration, minimalism and gesturalism. Over the course of his career Hernández has mixed diverse references: a physicality that recalls Action Painting, the shorthand figuration of cartoons, and passages evoking painterly precedents. This stylistic multiplicity grows out of Hernández's detailed and informed knowledge of art history. While his references are broad, he has developed a specific engagement with the work of old and modern masters from his native country, Spain, as a way of getting in touch with his personal and artistic roots. For Hernández, such references are signposts rather than subjects in their own right. Distilled to essences of line, color and form, his paintings always foreground the particularities of the medium, its defining characteristics.

In keeping with the breadth of his influences, Hernández employs a variety of seemingly contradictory techniques including washing, scraping, and working directly from paint tubes. While some works are the result of conspicuous addition, his 'wash' canvases, by contrast, are produced by layering and removing paint with a heavy-duty pressure washer. Almost archaeological in nature, this method involves digging through pigment to expose the canvas beneath, a process that the artist associates with sculptural carving. The resulting paintings have a dramatic, exploratory quality. (*Victoria Miro Gallery*)

Room X: Time and Texture

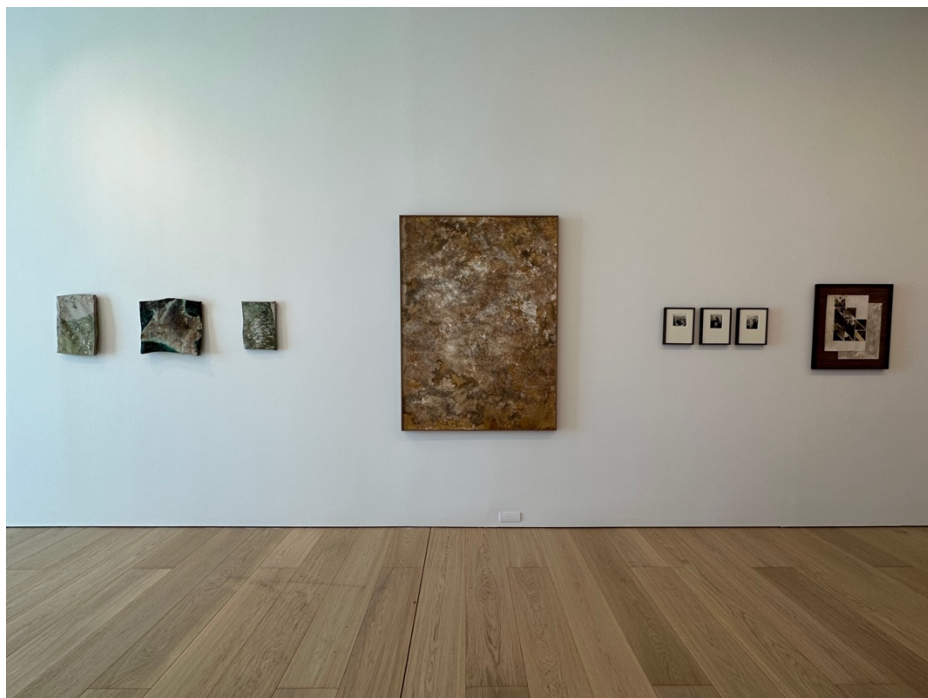


Fernando García
(Madrid, Spain, 1975)

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the work of Fernando García is his ability to build (and to suggest) spaces for contemplation and calm. Rather than physical, they are mental places built with containment, balanced and delicately ironic, the result of the artist's life experience, of his different travels, settlements and moves between cities in Spain and Europe. (*Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos*)

Time is the measure on which Fernando García articulates his work. There is no beginning or end, no stages or periods. Everything is happening. It is time that shapes decisions and approaches, presents different materials, illuminates fleeting encounters and trips and suggests light and the sea. There the exhibition takes place. (*Galería Heinrich Erhardt*)

"Last Impressions" is made with the application of 134 layers of white acrylic on gesso, one for each day that it snowed during his stay in Finland. On the canvas it is possible to see the craquelure that has been produced over the years.



Javier Arce
(Santander, Spain, 1973)

Javier Arce's early output was undergirded by a concern with the popularization of the image and its instant consumption, his unease captured in a conflict with the global and reflected in the slowness of the practice of drawing. For more than a decade, ever since settling in his Pasiego hut—the opposite extreme of the global—the artist started to speak from the personal and the individual, which comes together in a single critical discourse, without detriment to the discipline of drawing, but this time also paying attention to the unhurried uses and tempered gestures of the objects and materials that surround him.

Over a century ago, the images taken by the photographer Antonio Cavilla (1867-1908) in colonial Africa (in other words, the exotic of yesteryear) were printed—mostly unattributed—in newspapers like *Blanco y Negro* (again, the global of back then). Part of this legacy, the portraits taken by the photographer from Gibraltar in his studio in Tangiers, are arranged in a row at the entrance to this exhibition. The models, used for calling cards, postcards or propaganda for the West and photographed with an

Orientalist outlook thanks to the backdrops in his studio, are seen today against the neutral background of the gallery walls. The staged legacy of this compendium of nuanced gradations is carried over into the rest of the works in which Javier Arce intervenes, like a mechanism of superimposition for the construction of an originally hegemonic narrative which nevertheless disconcerts us when recovering the photographer's original plates and analyzing them from the more exhaustive gaze of the present.

Apart from the fiction largely created in the images using props and objects which the photographer had in his studio, more than a century later these same fittings are still being used on a daily basis by the Islamic or Berber people. Questions like whom is behind the hijab, what is inside the tajine or the haughty gaze of the men portrayed by the photographer, now require an additional developing process. Javier Arce has drawn with silver nitrate one of Cavilla's characters which he hangs over a stick alongside a *handira*; or he uses chemicals from the analogue era to trace so-called *chino cordobés* paving patterns. But he also uses techniques from the post-photography era, like the chroma key behind an Ida Ou Nadif haik or the mouse to cut and paste collages which he ends up arranging with human hands. He has compiled and used elements and materials he has worked with in the Sirwa Mountains, like the sunlight that draws the vegetation on the papers but which also cuts through a lattice that allows him to create a pattern of layers and superimpositions in the exhibition space. A whole mesh that evokes contrasts between the local and the global, the natural and the built, the instantaneous and the reposed; in short, a confrontation between reality and fiction. (*"Javier Arce: Montaña, trigo, tigre"*, 2019, *The Goma, Madrid*)



José Díaz
(Madrid, Spain, 1981)

Since its beginnings, the pictorial world of José Díaz's work has been deeply imbued with both historical references and a recognition of the digital age's ardent circulation of images. His subject is the city and, more specifically, the experience of his hometown, Madrid. It is a longtime point of reference in his abstract output and one that has evoked issues as varied as Spain's Baroque tradition and the smoke-stained tunnels of the city's ring road. The once dark and densely layered surfaces of older paintings give way now to an unprecedented clarity. His city is still his backdrop, but his current practice—rooted not so much in materials as in data—is closer to the flow of the spontaneous than to the weight of the inherited. (*Javier Hontoria, Art Forum, 2016*)



Patricia Gómez (Valencia, Spain, 1978)
María Jesús González (Valencia, Spain, 1978)

“Since 2002, we have been working on projects that try to rescue the memory of places immersed in processes of disappearance or abandonment. Through the intervention inside uninhabited buildings, we carried out a work of photographic exploration and stamping by removal of large mural surfaces, with the aim of extracting a material record of their condition, and ultimately, generating a physical record and documentation that allows us to preserve the traces and memory of places that will cease to exist.” (*Patricia Gómez and María Jesús González, Bombas Gens*)

“The Fuerteventura Internment Center for Foreigners was created in 2003 and is located in a former Legion barracks. It is the largest facility of its kind in Spain and one of the largest in the European Union. It was closed in 2012 and currently does not house any migrant, although it maintains the infrastructure and a permanent police force. It kept a large number of written testimonies on the walls of the cells, where the first phase of the project was developed (May-June 2014).”



Carlos Sagrera

(Madrid, Spain, 1987 – Leipzig, Germany, currently)

The work of Carlos Sagrera are interiors; different spaces of a home where time seems to have stood still. The spaces evoke associations with the past and as a spectator one wonders if the interiors really existed or if they are merely created by the artists imagination. We might recognize the furniture and objects from the 50s and 60s, the period in which the grandparents of Sagrera furnished their home, where the artist also lived during most of his childhood.

The domestic deterioration that comes from ordinary use leaves traces on the furniture, the floors, the walls and the ceiling. The routines and habits from those who occupy the space leave evidence of living. These patterns or traces appear in the paintings; fluid and incomplete reconstructions of spaces which are no longer possible to access but, through this recreation, almost seem tactile. A frozen moment in the slow process of fading memories of places that were once so familiar. (*Arróniz Arte Contemporáneo*)

Rooms XI and XII: The Body, Architecture and the Physical Space



Daniel Canogar
(Madrid, Spain, 1964)

“Memory, and its loss, are a central theme in my work. Unless we remember, we are condemned to an amnesiac present, textureless and flat, lacking the perspective of time. (In *‘Osarios’*, 2001) Human bones are released from the archeologist’s lab and float weightless. Through photography the bones are reanimated.” (*Daniel Canogar*)



Jaume Plensa
(Barcelona, Spain, 1955)

Plensa has focused his work exclusively on the human figure, where matter and the word are vectors that converge. At the beginning of his career, in the 1980s, his sculptures were anthropomorphic with expressionist volumes of wrought or cast iron suggesting human landscapes with totemic and primitive echoes. (*Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona*)



Bernardí Roig
(Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 1965)

His multidisciplinary works (sculpture, video-art, drawings, paintings, texts) are an obsessive reflection on isolation, the erotic drive and desire through a refined language of minimalist and conceptual heritage that situates the representation of the human figure in the center of its works. His obsessive and disturbing works, can be understood as devices towards solitude wherein the urgency of “speaking through the impossibility of speech” is presented, in an attempt to find figures and images for deranged times.

All his works deal with the same argument: the imprisonment of the body and blindness of sight, emblems of the cognitive faculties. Figures, always placed in a context that amplify the rooms, have an enigmatic relationship with the space that assumes connotations of an emptiness that is increased by the irritating action of a light that incarnates and saturates an uneventful site with physical tension. (*Institut d'Estudis Baleàrics*)



Pepe Espaliú
(Córdoba, Spain 1955 – 1993)

Pepe Espaliú was born in Córdoba in 1955 to a family connected to jewellers and goldsmiths, and studied in the school of arts and crafts of his home town. He then continued his education at the School of Fine Arts in Seville, and finally moved to Barcelona in the early seventies. His contacts with the Catalan capital's art scene, and the air of freedom within it, were to be of fundamental importance to his practice.

Towards the end of the decade, Espaliú moved to Paris, where he came into contact with the international art scene and came across the figure and *oeuvre* of Lacan and Barthes, who were to leave a deep mark on his work.

In the eighties, his relationship with *La Máquina Española* began, the Seville gallery around which an important nucleus of avant garde art was generated. Soon afterwards, he exhibited in Paris, Amsterdam, and New York. His work increasingly moved away from painting in order to explore sculpture, dealing with a personal and unique language in direct relation with the international renewal taking place at the time. But he also drew, wrote, or carried out actions. The connection between all these disciplines is evident in a series of personal symbolic images which were to become the fundamental axis of his mature work.

In 1990, he discovered he was HIV-positive, and the illness marked the last, feverish years of his life: a new series of sculptures, and above all the *Carrying Project*, which he focused on in the last year of his life, first with a performance in San Sebastian, and later on in Madrid, where it had an enormous repercussion in the media. (*"Pepe Espaliú. In These Twenty-Five Years"* (excerpt), *garcía galería, Madrid, 2018*)



Juan Muñoz
(Madrid, Spain, 1953 – Ibiza, Spain, 2001)

Muñoz is part of the first generation of artists who reintroduced figuration onto the art scene and who also had an extraordinary ability to weave narratives into theatrical-laden atmospheres. In his work there is great tension between unreal and tangible spaces, with references to the world of magic, illusion and mystery. His figures, among which acrobats, dwarves, dancers and oriental characters are found, possess an extraordinary physical presence. Silence, solitude and isolation take on a special role in his artistic creation... (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)

Despite the often-unsettling qualities of his work, Muñoz consistently acknowledged the emotional range of the human condition, from the absurd and irrational to the poignant and humorous. Shown individually and in groups, the figure—inspired by ventriloquist dummies, dwarves, and punching-bag clowns—is a constant presence in his work. (*Guggenheim*)



Aitor Ortiz
(Bilbao, Spain, 1971)

Aitor Ortiz lives and works in Bilbao where, after taking technical studies in image and sound, he decided to devote himself to photography. His profession as an architecture photographer coexists with his artistic practice, developed in the mid-1990s, wherein imagined architecture – constructed on real, sometimes anonymous or deserted spaces – was for a time his main theme.

Ortiz conceives construction and deconstruction of the image as the starting point for his creation. The space created is the result of his intervention on reality using photographs of buildings that have been digitally retouched and treated with infographics in order to offer a disquieting, timeless image of the object, avoiding its recognition. His works are conceived in series so as to exhaustively develop different aspects of a spatial motif. From an analytical perspective, he considers the process just as important as the final result: he dissects the architectural object, reconstructing it, removes the image obtained from pure formal recognition and focuses on space. (*Fundación Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern I Contemporani de Palma*)



Chema Alvargonzález

(Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, 1960 – Berlin, Germany, 2009)

Alvargonzález' works, of a markedly conceptual nature, alternate above all photography, installations and sculpture. His interventions on buildings, installations involving neon lights and light boxes are some of the media Alvargonzález used to present his work, always set around a common axis: light-words-forms-architecture-spectator. Behind his work there is always a profound research process, with references to sociology, philosophy or anthropology. Urban spaces and the role of man in today's society are fundamental concerns of this artist, based on which he experiments with natural or artificial light. Light played an important role in his artistic production; he used it as a medium to reflect on today's society and the very progression of humankind. The artist declared that he started out from intuition understood as light that illuminates paths that were dark. (*Fundación Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern I Contemporani de Palma*)



Isidoro Valcárcel Medina
(Murcia, Spain, 1937)

Isidoro Valcárcel Medina is one of the most relevant names in Spanish conceptual art. In his beginnings in the field of painting, the idea of *space* was already present. The city, the journey, the walk, or as the artist himself has called his conscious way of rambling, “the passeggiata”, have been the background, setting and object of many of his works, from the 1970’s to the present.

Relojes [Clocks] is the photographic record of the street calendars in Madrid for each of the 365 days of the year 1973. A journey through the urban space that introduces here the idea of time, a recurring notion in Valcárcel Medina’s work. (*ProyectoSD*)



Cristina Iglesias
(San Sebastián, Spain, 1956)

Cristina Iglesias has been very interested in redefining sculpture as an expanded field that leads to a questioning of the object in its relationship with space and architecture. Her sculptures integrate with the architecture of the places they occupy, and thus play with the interweaving of reality and appearances.

Her artworks generate suggestive fictional worlds and set aside all utilitarian purposes to become settings conducive to reflective observation. Intersections between the natural world and the cultural world are frequently seen in her work, with shadows, cascades, whirlpools and foliage, in which the idea of refuge is a recurring metaphor.

The artist has displayed unceasing interest in a wide range of materials, such as alabaster, tapestry, glass, resin, aluminum, bronze, iron, cement, wood, concrete... Even water makes an appearance as yet another sculptural element, playing a leading role in some of her public projects. (*"Cristina Iglesias: Metonymy"* (excerpt), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2013)



Susana Solano
(Barcelona, Spain, 1946)

While Solano has made abstract works on paper throughout her life, she began creating the sculpture for which she is best known in 1979. Her first solo exhibition was in 1980 at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, and included a group of brass-and-wood sculptures and sewn-canvas wall hangings. Thereafter her work continued to encompass a range of materials typically associated with modernist sculpture, such as iron, steel, lead, glass, and wire mesh. Through her manipulations and juxtapositions of these materials, however, her sculpture developed to become more evocative of structures found in nature or in domestic settings, such as a bridge or a table. She focused on their potential symbolic meanings by creating works that are formally rigorous and imposing in scale and materiality.

Solano constructs her abstract metal sculptures as autonomous, enclosed receptacles, often reminiscent of cages, in which inaccessible interior space plays an essential role. In addition, her human-scaled works are often handmade; the traces of her processes, such as welding marks, folds, stains, and scratches, are frequently left visible on the surface. (*Guggenheim*)

In her many travels through Africa and Asia, Solano has been introduced to obsolete procedures and production modes that are only present in small regions. Therefore, in these works there is also an ecological reflection on the progressive extinction of craft production against industry. Similarly, these trips are sources of endless inspiration for the artist that have allowed her to get closer to those essential truths common to all human beings on which she creates her sculptures. (*Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*)

Room XIII: Concrete Poetry



Joan Brossa

(Barcelona, Spain, 1919 – 1998)

A libertarian poet, critical, defiant, Joan Brossa has produced a body of work that transcends classification. Time and again in books, exhibitions and stage works, his pieces have fired direct shots into the conscience of the spectator, while critics and curators have often tiptoed around the transcendence of the message.

One thing that Joan Brossa made very clear was his strong critical spirit, and that his ethics and working practices were governed by it. This was true from the very beginning, and it can be seen in his writings for avant garde group Dau al Set – based in Barcelona from 1948 to 1956 – in his radical stage creations and in the objects he created from the 1970s onwards. In his own words, “if I couldn’t write, in moments of euphoria I would be a guerrilla fighter, in moments of passivity a conjurer or magician. Being a poet includes both”.

Manuel Guerrero argues in *Joan Brossa o la revolta poética* that Brossa’s work is rooted in a revolutionary culture associated with the republican and anarchist tradition, and that it expresses the nostalgia of a happy childhood spent in republican Catalonia. At the same time, it shows a radical confrontation with the official culture of Francoism and the need to break with the dark times of the dictatorship. Thus, utopia and alienation constitute the opposites of a dialectical work that seeks to take hold in reality. *Nogueras Blanchard (excerpts)*



Jordi Alcaraz
(Calella, Spain, 1963)

Jordi Alcaraz is a creator at the intersection between visual poetry and conceptual projection, whose work consists of a metaphorical approach to the object. Alcaraz experiments with fragile materials imbued with a certain lyricism – water, glass, mirrors and books – to create bonds of tension between them, while constructing a discourse associated with volume, language and time. His output, which transcends limits between disciplines, is a paean to the unfinished work and art as fiction.

Jordi Alcaraz first entered the art world through sculpture and print making and later painting. However, his unmistakable style resides in the fusion of various techniques and disciplines. Material is of capital importance in his work. Alcaraz plays with it, transforming, manipulating and altering it, letting it flow, but always putting it to the service of his ideas. With a touch of irony, freshness and lyricism, but never forgetting aesthetic beauty, the multidisciplinary artist sets before the viewer artistic objects that invite aesthetic pleasure as well as reflection. (*“Jordi Alcaraz: Esborradís”, Can Framis Museum, Barcelona, 2017*)

Room XIV: An elephant in the room



Martí Cormand

(Barcelona, Spain 1970 – New York, USA, currently)

As Cormand explains: The title (“*Un elefante en el Prado*”) comes from an article by Peio H. Riaño published on December 10, 2017 in “*El Español*” where one of the most fascinating and unpublished scenes of the Civil War is explained: the shipment of almost a hundred showcases from the Museum of Natural Sciences to The Prado museum. Among other animals there was an elephant, the only one that did not have a crate. The Republic government decided that the Prado was the best place to protect the funds of other museums. The Ministry appointed the Prado as the ideal refuge, although its paintings had moved prior due to lack of security. A week before the bombing, the Museum emptied itself of thousands of paintings that were transported to Valencia, and then to Geneva, via Figueras. The transfer was orchestrated by Josep Renau.

The title “An elephant in the Prado” suggests the English expression “an elephant in the room” which refers to an obvious truth that is ignored or goes unnoticed. It also applies to an easily understood problem or risk that no one wants to discuss. Badly solved issues of the past return, and come to light in the present, to be inevitably discussed.

Cormand’s work attests to the coalescence of time, or rather, of an intangible past that can only be grasped in the present through intuition. According to the artist, our present reaffirms the concept of an “eternal return,” the idea that our existence is cyclical in nature instead of linear. These images also become a byproduct of entangled temporality in cyberspace, where Cormand often derives his source material. (“*Martí Cormand: Un elefante en el Prado*”, 2019, *Espacio Minimo, Madrid*)



Javier Arce
(Santander, Spain, 1973)

Javier Arce's early output was undergirded by a concern with the popularization of the image and its instant consumption, his unease captured in a conflict with the global and reflected in the slowness of the practice of drawing. For more than a decade, ever since settling in his Pasiego hut—the opposite extreme of the global—the artist started to speak from the personal and the individual, which comes together in a single critical discourse, without detriment to the discipline of drawing, but this time also paying attention to the unhurried uses and tempered gestures of the objects and materials that surround him. (*"Javier Arce: Montaña, trigo, tigre"*, 2019, *The Goma, Madrid*)



Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes
(Fuendetodos, Spain, 1746 – Bordeaux, France, 1828)

'Animal Folly' from the 'Disparates' (Follies / Irrationalities): The elephant is based on a drawing Goya made in the 1800s, possibly upon the arrival in Madrid of an Indian elephant. Conveying the wonder with which animals from other places were regarded in early nineteenth-century Spain, this print has been interpreted as a reference to the so-called Persian Manifesto (from a note on the customs of "the ancient Persians" in its first article) that led to the annulment of the constitution and the restoration of Ferdinand VII in 1814. Here, men in Eastern robes hold an open book and a harness with bells, attempting to lure an elephant standing in a circular space that recalls a bullring.

One of the four additional plates prepared for the set but not included in the posthumous first edition published by the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid in 1864 under the title 'Los Proverbios'. (*Metropolitan Museum, New York*)

Room XV: Disasters of War



Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes

(Fuendetodos, Spain, 1746 – Bordeaux, France, 1828)

Although Francisco de Goya lived and worked in the 18th-19th centuries, the unconstrained and unapologetic expression of his work have made many declare him “the father of Modern Art”. Influential for generations after him and still so in the present, the etching series *Disasters of War* remains a striking example of this important contribution to Art.

Seeing and hearing

When the great Australian art critic Robert Hughes reviewed a Goya exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1989, he wrote that “[Goya] speaks to us with an urgency that no artist of our time can muster”. He was right: Goya feels like our contemporary. In part, this is thanks to the nightmarish, abject plates of his *Disasters of War*, which, in hindsight, seem to anticipate the atrocities of mechanized conflict that scarred the 20th Century. For many people, Goya’s etchings even provide a pioneering example of tough, first-hand war reportage: plate 44 of the series, for instance, is entitled “I saw it”.

Although they were not published until 1863, the *Disasters* date from the second decade of the 19th Century, when Goya was already a mature artist with a reputation as a brilliant court painter and satirist. Years earlier, in 1793, he had suffered a mysterious illness, perhaps a series of strokes, which left him permanently deaf. This had a profound impact on his art, which became increasingly visionary and strange – arguably paving the way for the nihilistic worldview expressed in the *Disasters of War*.

But it was the turbulence, hardship and depravity of the Napoleonic occupation of Spain during the Peninsular War (1808-14), when Napoleon’s brother Joseph Bonaparte was proclaimed King, which actually prompted Goya to make the series. In October 1808, aged 62, Goya was summoned by General José Palafox y Melci to Zaragoza, the provincial capital of Aragon not far from his birthplace where he had trained as an artist. Palafox had become a national hero after inspiring thousands of Spaniards to resist French troops who had laid siege to the city. What Goya witnessed there provided the starting point for the series, which he began two years later, around 1810.

Over the following decade, it grew into an album with a title page inscribed with the following words: “The fatal consequences of the Bloody War in Spain with Bonaparte”.

Savagery and suffering

Even today it is difficult to look at the Disasters, because Goya catalogues the brutality and fatal consequences of war in such a stark, confrontational and unflinching manner. The series is divided into three groups: prints of wartime “disasters” responding to the Napoleonic invasion of Spain; a record of the famine in Madrid of 1811-12, in which more than 20,000 people died; and a final ‘chapter’ of so-called allegorical *caprichos* lampooning the repressive government of Ferdinand VII, who returned to Spain as king in 1814.

There are many scenes of savagery and suffering, including one well-known print in which three mutilated and naked corpses are bound to a single tree. Elsewhere, we see a soldier hacking with his sword at the groin of an upside-down victim, as well as another dismembered carcass, this time impaled upon a tree-trunk. All of the prints in this orgy of bloodletting are accompanied by laconic captions, which add to the generally despairing tone.

“The impact of the scenes is incredible,” says the independent art historian Juliet Wilson-Bareau, one of the world’s leading Goya experts. “Each one is a powerful, original work of art in its own right, yet linked to the others with a common theme, including the way their titles – terse comments, questions, or cries of outrage – connect them, and read on from one to another. The grouping of the series into three ‘chapters’ gives the whole a sense of rhythm and purpose.”

Goya must have hoped that he would live to see the publication of his Disasters, but the despotic rule of Ferdinand VII made this impossible. “Under his repressive and reactionary regime,” Wilson-Bareau explains, “there was no way that Goya could have published his set of prints that so clearly denounced all violence and all abuse of power.”

Still, following their posthumous publication, the Disasters proved enormously influential, inspiring artists including the German Otto Dix as well as Dalí and Picasso. Even the war photographer Don McCullin acknowledges a debt: “When I took pictures in war, I couldn’t help thinking of Goya,” he has said.

The genius of the Disasters is that they transcend particularities of the Peninsular War and its aftermath to feel universal – and modern. Perhaps this is because, as the British writer Aldous Huxley put it in 1947, “All [Goya] shows us is war’s disasters and squalors, without any of the glory or even picturesqueness.” (“*Goya’s Disasters of War: The truth about war laid bare*” (*excerpts*), Alastair Sooke, BBC Culture, July 2014)

Installations throughout the building:

Found along the hallways and stairway landings, next to windows and in the entry courtyard of the building are strategically placed artworks connecting inside to outside and vice-versa, relating back to main themes of the exhibitions and making us pause as we rush through from room to room.

Reception area: this is where our offices are and where we welcome you to 20/21.

Hallway Shelves: while glass shelves allow light to enter the hallway leading to the event spaces behind the reception area, it is also a place to discover a pocket-exhibition of objects or a commissioned site-specific installation.

Bottom staircase landing: a long wall that runs the length of the first set of steps to the upper level is an invitation for works that are particularly effective on horizontal stretches of space – for example, a panoramic landscape or a series to be seen as one.

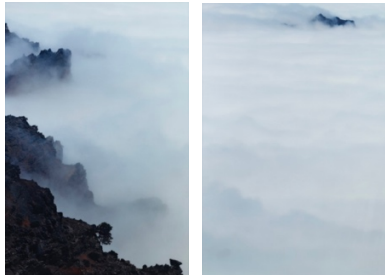
The Viewpoint: while strategic for a bench to enjoy the great view through this window behind the bottom of the staircase, you might find an artwork has already taken your spot. “The Viewpoint” is a place where specially selected works of art with poignant connections to the environment are placed, not only to face the scenery that once inspired their creation but also to be visible from the outside to those just passing by.

Upper staircase landing: at the top of the staircase, one finds the unusual view of looking out of a window to look into another, a clear view into The Lighthouse installation. The wall across becomes an interesting location for a work to interact with this particular situation.

The Lighthouse: an outdoor balcony on the upper level for special works of art that use light as part of their medium, somewhat turning the space into a beacon to be seen from afar outside or up close from behind the glass window inside.

Patio: just in case you didn’t notice it coming into the courtyard of the building, don’t miss the outdoor sculpture between the entrance/exit ways.

Reception area



Axel Hütte

(Essen, Germany, 1951)

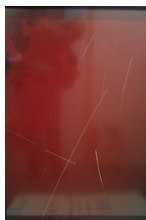
“La Palma”, 2005



Gerhard Richter

(Dresden, 1932 - Cologne, Germany, currently)

“Kanarische Landschaften II”, 1971



Sharon Harper

(Stamford, CT, 1966 - Cambridge, MA, USA, currently)

“La Palma”

Hallway shelves



Fernando García
(Madrid, España, 1975)
“Toy (for S. and N.)”, 2022

Fernando García's project entitled "Toy (for S. and N.)" is conceived from the deconstruction of a look and a location. We could divide it into different phases that correspond to different approaches to the work itself and to García's imagination. On the one hand, we have the idea and location of the three places where the work takes place: the island of La Palma, the museum and the showcase for which “Toy (for S. and N.)” is made specifically. On the other hand, the project invites a formal reading that not only depends on the geographical, but also on the artistic references that embrace the work and its context. Readings that speak directly of deconstruction, of the history of sculpture, but at the same time they also do so in a local and popular key. Finally, the third "phase" of the project emphasizes the idea of a gift or offering, something destined and dedicated to someone in particular, with all the vicissitudes that this entails.

In this way and starting from the architectural idea of the museum, its own structural and formal nature, Fernando García's proposal tries to “duplicate” the architectural mechanics of the building, as if in a sculptural piece located in the showcase chosen for its location. there is a reflection or an echo, a rebound, of what is placed above.

Following the story of the founders, of their explanations during the visit to the museum space, García re-elaborates a story that is sometimes fictional and sometimes literal that gives rise to the construction of fragmented elements, arranged based on sculptural modules ranging from the playful idea of playing with the sculptural concepts of Chillida. The idea of space, present in architectural nature and highly visible in the museum project on La Palma, is a conceptual starting point that allows García to create modular compositions that fill, empty, divide and separate, thus building a modular piece made up of three different pieces that in turn are duplicated to occupy the entire length and height of the showcase.

Following in the footsteps of García's work, his systematic exploration of the context in which he works leads us to the relationship between the architecture of the continent of works, the museum, its architecture, and Porís de Candelaria in La Palma. Thus, uniting what has been called high culture (avant-garde sculpture) and the popular conception of art (basic influence on García's work), these wooden cubes have been carried out with house interior structures that are completed with elements of the artist's imagination, which are then distributed throughout the interiors of each of the modules once they are decomposed.

Candelaria's images also respond to a conception of emptiness and light. From a natural location in which the cave acts as a major continent for another structure that in turn houses minor architectural elements.

The project is completed with a series of works on paper that make up a group of instructions, measurements and all kinds of annotations on each of the cultures, as well as a new series of Fernando García's work on simplified poetry books; in this case, starting from Félix Francisco Casanova's books of poems, he elaborates a new version of his intervened and simplified poetry books.

Bottom staircase landing and The Viewpoint



Spanish Drawing

**Antonio Saura, Manuel Rivera, Luis Feito, Rafael Canogar
Antoni Tàpies, Luis Gordillo, Eduardo Chillida**



Martín Chirino

(Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, España, 1925 – Madrid, España, 2019)

Martín Chirino's "Viento" reunites with the energy of the wind in its position, creating a confrontation between the natural and man-made.

Upper staircase landing and The Lighthouse



Bernardí Roig

(Palma de Mallorca, España, 1965)

Bernardí Roig's "Ejercicios para tener frío en Canarias", 2014 with its title that references the islands is an apt inaugural installation as we bring light and warmth to our newly built structure. And from within, on the upper staircase landing, "Cabeza Arrancada a Repulsion Exercises", 2005, another of Roig's light-sculptures hangs clear across the two windows above the entry patio.

Patio



Alberto Peral

(Santurce, España, 1966 – Barcelona, España, actualmente)

“Serie Mitad, Pieza 4”, 2017

Peral uses geometric figures, spheres, triangles, rhombuses, trapezoids, as elements of a formal vocabulary from which he elaborates projects that adapt to the spaces they are exhibited. Objects and installations that hide, in their apparent simplicity, precise mechanics and complex constructions place the gaze of the viewer in a land of double senses and visual games. (*Ana Mas Projects, Barcelona, 2017*)