

THE VALENCIAN INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART



AN INSTITUTION CREATED BY THE "GENERALITAT VALENCIANA" WITH VERY CLEAR AIMS IN MIND:
TO INCORPORATE VALENCIA INTO THE INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION CIRCUIT AND TO BUILD UP A TOP QUALITY
SELECTION OF SPECIALIZED ART.

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In Valencia, close to the *Passeig de la Petxina*, on a piece of land next to the old *Casa de la Beneficència*, a modern construction is now going up, complex and suggestive, whose function, on its completion next year, will be to house the art collections of the *Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM)*. The institution was created by the department of culture, education and science of the *Generalitat Valenciana*, with very clear aims in mind: to incorporate Valencia into the international exhibition circuit, and to build up a top quality collection of specialized art.

The construction of this museum—at a cost of over five hundred million pesetas—will provide the city with a suitable site, with the security measures and the conditions one expects in installations of this kind, in which to receive the exhibitions that go round Europe, organized by foundations, museums and cultural centres.

At the same time, the IVAM wants its showrooms to become the focal point for those who hope to get a proper idea of the work of particular artists, such as the sculptor Julio González, the museum's first exhibitor, or the painter Ignacio Pinazo. The IVAM has already purchased a representative part of these two men's work. More precisely, in 1985, the *Generalitat Valenciana* bought a set of over one hundred sculptures, paintings and drawings from Julio González, at a cost of over four hundred million pesetas. The 105 paintings and 369 drawings by Ignacio Pinazo that the Valencian gov-

ernment bought for the IVAM at the beginning of 1987 correspond to the least well known and most interesting part of the artist's work.

Tomàs Llorens has been director general of the *Patrimoni de la Generalitat Valenciana* since 1984, when the councillor for culture, Ciprià Ciscar, retrieved him from his teaching activities at the Portsmouth School of Architecture (Great Britain), for the good of the country's culture. Since last March, he has also been director of the IVAM. In fact, this man, who in the sixties promoted a whole generation of brilliant Valencian artists (including people like the *equip Crònica* or Andreu Alfaro), the theorist of the artistic avant-gardes of the Republic, the post-war years and exile, himself exiled after being expelled from the university by the Franco regime in 1972, has been the driving force behind the whole project.

"What concerns me", says Llorens, "is the consolidation of the infrastructure needed if we are to achieve a level of normality, both as regards conservation of our heritage and opening up to modernity." His work at the head of the patrimony department has been coherent with this intention. He has undertaken a considerable job of cataloguing the treasures and objects of artistic interest in the *País Valencià*, he has started a rational but ambitious policy of acquisition of works of art, he has encouraged fundamental projects like the rehabilitation of the Roman theatre of Sagunt, in accordance with a design by the architects Giorgio

Grassi and Miquel Portaceli, the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the museum of fine arts Sant Pius V, in Valencia, and the building of the IVAM museum itself.

Criticisms and controversies have not been lacking in all this work. The magnificent ideas proposed by the architects Grassi and Portaceli, severely criticised by the more reactionary sectors, are in danger of not being carried out because of the particular political situation of the city council. The preparation of the law which was to create the IVAM, approved by the *Corts Valencianes* on 23rd December 1986, caused a heated discussion in the *Consell Valencià de Cultura*, the *Generalitat's* advisory body, in which certain voices were raised against the IVAM's "excessive elitism". These voices demanded priority for Valencian art in the IVAM, questioning Llorens's policy of large acquisitions and his intention of creating an institution of a similar quality to that of the great museums of the world.

The debate went no further and today the IVAM, with its board of directors already named (apart from Tomàs Llorens, it also includes the critics Felipe Garín, Romà de la Calle and Valeriano Bozal, representing the *Consell Valencià de Cultura*, and Alfredo Pérez Sánchez, director of the Prado museum, Margit Rowell, conservator of the Pompidou Centre, and the critic Francisco Calvo Serraller, representing the *Generalitat*), provides hope for the Valencian cultural scene. ■



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