

CATALAN ARTISTS AT EXPO'92



ZUSH. LA TREGUA, 1986



RAFAEL BARTOLOZZI. TOT UN ESTIU, 1981

25 CATALAN ARTISTS ARE EXHIBITING THEIR WORK AT THE CATALAN PAVILION AT EXPO'92, THE UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION TAKING PLACE THIS YEAR IN SEVILLE. CATALÒNIA PRESENTS IN THIS SPECIAL DOSSIER AN ARTICLE PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE MAGAZINE "CULTURA" -OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE OF THE GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA-, WHICH PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE ARTISTS AND PRESENTS A CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON THEIR WORK.

J. CORREDOR-MATHEOS AUTHOR AND CRITIC

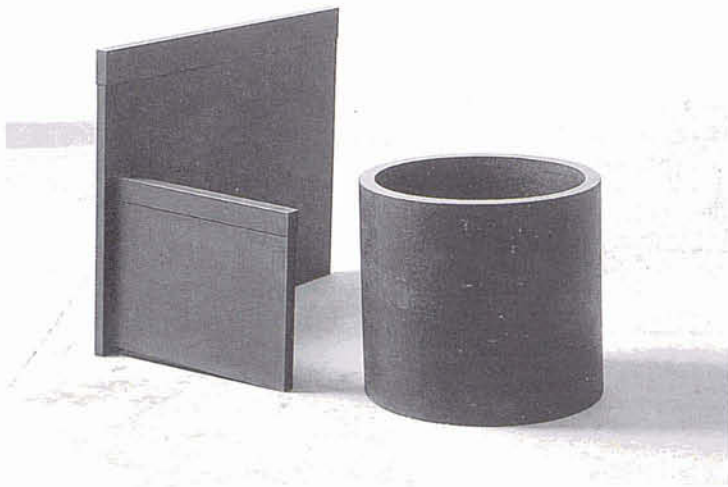
Twenty-five exhibitions. A universal exhibition is always an excellent occasion for projecting not only industrial and technical products, but cultural products too. In the past, this has always been understood by a great diversity of countries, who have presented their painters, sculptors and other artists in specially designed buildings. This is also the way Catalonia has understood it in the case of its participation in the Expo at Seville '92.

A country's art is as much that belonging to the historical heritage, that which has achieved a certain indisputable quality, as that which is being produced at the present moment. In selecting what is already historical heritage, the problem raised is one of representativeness and choice. The present, naturally, is more risky and, by definition, disputable.

The historical selection, in the case of the Catalan pavilion, sets out to show, with a small sample -twelve, fifteen

pieces-, the high points of Catalan art, from the Romanesque, at the time of the very formation of Catalonia as a nation, and the Gothic, to the wealth of the twentieth century, always with a restrictive criterion limited to the greatest international figures.

The general curator of the pavilion, Francesc Sanuy, who has seen the whole project through with great drive and taste, wanted the presence of today's artists -that is, living artists- to form a succession. In view of the number of

SERGI AGUILAR, *IT N.º 3*, 1989

PEREJAUME, WATZMANN, 1988

weeks the exhibition lasts, there could also be twenty-five invited artists. The challenge was, and is, a great one: to present twenty-five exhibitions, each of which was to last only seven days. A challenge for the organisers, an effort for the Generalitat de Catalunya, and also for the artists. Each exhibition will have its own catalogue, and the presenter –the critic or writer chosen by the artist– will also have the job of making an oral presentation on the day of the inauguration. In the selection and other work in the artistic sphere which corresponded to me, I have had the collaboration of two advisers, Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera and Daniel Giralte-Miracle. The selection has, of course, presented great problems, because of the large number of Catalan artists and the fact that we wanted the exhibition to be representative of the generations that coincide at these moments and that cover fifty years of the life of Catalonia: from those who made themselves known before the civil war, to the young people who are beginning to achieve recognition. Under these condi-

tions, twenty-five would seem to be insufficient and makes it impossible to include others who we also feel deserve to be present.

The names of these twenty-five artists, with their presenters, in the order that has been established, are as follows: Antoni Tàpies (J. Corredor-Matheos), Albert Ràfols-Casamada (Antoni Marí), Josep Guinovart (Angel Crespo), Joan Hernández-Pijuan (M. Teresa Blanch), Xavier Corberó (Luis Goytisolo), Frederic Amat (Vicenç Altaió), Joan Pere Viladecans (Josep Miquel García), Josep M. Subirachs (Francesc Fontbona), Montserrat Gudiol (Francesc Miralles), Moises Villèlia (M. Lluïsa Borràs), Eduard Arranz Bravo (Luis Casado), Sergi Aguilar (Menene Gras), Rafael Bartolozzi (Joan Abelló), Carles Pazos (Victoria Combalá), Antoni Llena (Manuel Borja), Modest Cuixart (Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera), J.J. Tharrats (Daniel Giralte-Miracle), Xavier Grau (Anna Guasch), Francesc Artigau (Miquel Molins), Marcel Martí (Arnau Puig), Robert Llimós (Rafael Santos Torroella), Zush (Manel Clot), Perejaume (J.M. Llompart), Tom Carr (Gloria Moure) and Antoni Clavé (Manuel Vázquez Montalbán).

We also plan to publish a folder of lithographs in the usual limited edition, which will serve as a souvenir and as a gift for some of the important figures who visit our pavilion, with the particularity that there will be twenty-four lithographs and that Tàpies will be responsible for the conception and the work of the folder that will contain them. Another object that will be used as a gift for other people and institutions it is intended to distinguish will be a medal –not at all conventional– produced by Antoni Clavé.

This is the programme as laid out by the president of the Generalitat de Catalunya, Jordi Pujol, at the presentation of the project for the pavilion and the activities that will take place there. We are sure that the work all this has involved will be repaid by an exhibit which, thanks to the merits of our creators, will be a brilliant one and one representative of the rich reality our art has had and continues to have.



TÀPIES. CAMA, 1988. MIXED TECHNIQUE ON PAPER, 64,5 x 50 CM



RÀFOLS CASAMADA. ARGONAUTES, 1983. ACRYLIC/CANVAS, 100 x 100 CM



HERNÁNDEZ PIJUAN. LA CASA DESDE LA QUE SE MIRA EL CAMPO. OIL ON ARCHES PAPER, 157 x 120 CM.



XAVIER CORBERÓ. MR. EYEBROW, 1987-88



MR. EMPTY HEAD, 1988. BASALT, 147 x 59 x 56 CM



ROCINANTE, THE HORSE. BASALT, 221 x 87 x 71 CM

ANTONI TÀPIES

(Barcelona, 1923)



One of the founders, in 1948, of *Dau al Set*, he held his first individual exhibition at the *Galeries Laietanes* in 1950. Since then his work has been exhibited in many galleries all over the world. Tàpies, on the basis of a magical figurative art, introduced Informalism into our country, used mixed procedures of all kinds (sand, cloth, straw), as well as collage. During the sixties he continued to work in the sphere of research; the principal innovations were his political references with the use of symbols and words written on the canvas or other support. Tàpies makes use of the usual range of tones, where colour is used as a support, but basically as a medium. His calligraphy, his rich graphic repertory, the influence of the space, the sensuous treatment of the material and the refined use of the chromatic ranges are a demonstration of his mastery of an expressive language that confers on the spectator a broad sense of dialogue and of profound introspective identification.

...The pictures in this exhibition do not remove us from the world we know. These surfaces are signs that are familiar to us and at the same time mysterious. Teaching us to see that which lies before us and which we have not seen is a merit of Antoni Tàpies. Really seeing means knowing. In doing so we interpret the meaning of materials, forms, signs. In this great artist, the anti-nomy between art-nature and art-figurative reality is not, as in other cases, irreducible. Certainly, entering a picture is like going through the looking-glass; but quite unlike the symmetry Alice found in her wonderful adventure. From

the bank of Tàpies's art the everyday world is illuminated with a new light. To move around this terrain we have to learn to get to grips with symbols, a profound language that calls for the use of all our powers and that allows us to understand otherwise unexplainable phenomena. Crosses, letters, numbers, different signs, open wounds in the matter, the matter itself in its transparency, the elements it incorporates, a treatment that seems to be not the work of man but of the ages of his countless agents... Everything is what it appears to be and, furthermore, a symbol that must be apprehended and known, not deciphered.

The way he contemplates what is real through art lies outside the mainstream of today's culture, in which matter, viewed in its possible opacity, reveals an impoverishment of our vision. In spite of the widespread recognition Tàpies has achieved and the influence he has had on the art of our time, he is as much inside it as outside. Just as our view of the everyday world would be different without him, so would art today if this great Catalan artist had not taught us to see reality with a vision that is as ancient as it is new...

J. Corredor-Matheos

JOAN HERNÁNDEZ-PIJUAN
Barcelona, 1931

Trained at the *Escola d'Arts Aplicades i Oficis Artístics Llotja* and the *Escola Superior de Belles Arts*, in Barcelona, he founded the *Grup Sílex* in 1956. In 1957 he travelled to Paris, where he came into direct contact with the experience of Informalism and studied engraving and lithography at the *College*

of Fine Arts. Beginning in the sixties he moved towards still life and introduced isolated objects; these years saw his gradual discovery of the landscape theme. The space is measured to the last millimetre and the painting based on a study of colour, light and movement; subsequently he introduced large monochrome fields using vibratile, atmospheric brushstrokes; later he returned to insinuated figurative references. His recent work has gradually acquired nakedness and emptiness, synthesis and formal brevity, which are translated into a state of spiritual deliquescence.

...What are we told about landscape by large, lobulate forms that catch the flush of the dense ochre space on which they seem to float? What idea of vegetation do we get from a large inflated brush-stroke or a slender outline, one pushing, the other cutting the infinitely empty thicknesses? Which is the house, or is it, perhaps, a tree? The stretched tension reaches right to the edges...

All this is understanding of the landscape, an understanding of landscape as a pictorial equivalent, linked to a sense of monochromy, of emptiness and minuteness, which has given Joan Hernández Pijuan a solitary position, as praiseworthy as it is impregnable, in the Catalan art world. His long pictorial career, covering more than thirty years, is based on the idea of a contemporary view of landscape: a living alchemy of measurable space.

His brushes laboriously travel the space, they clean it, they fill it with exquisiteness and sobriety, they reinstate a profound and subtle speciality. Landscape as a theme is no more than the coupling of the sensitive vision and its abstract idea, the alliance between the image sensed and the senses filled with colour, the orchestration of the sign with the whole space...

Teresa Blanch

XAVIER CORBERÓ

Barcelona, 1935



After studying at the Escola Massana, Corberó went to London in 1955 where he fed on the constructivist ideas that characterize his work. At the beginning of the sixties the chief features of his work could already be glimpsed: stylization and refinement in the most rigorous architectural tradition. But, over and above the lyrical aestheticism that invades his work, the dominant sign of his production is still the beautiful, painstaking workmanship.

Corberó's sculptures are conceived with a refined formal synthesis which gives them the quality of sublimation; works with shiny, polished surfaces that become ethereal and that seem to dot the space with stars of light.

...“Elegance”, a word before which it is worth stopping as regards Corberó's work, in the same way that the sculptor suspends his activity for a moment when he comes across some particularly significant vein in the stone, convinced he has hit on the shape he was looking for. Elegance, in fact, is the common denominator both of the apparently most contradictory features of his personality –humour and seriousness, tact and pragmatism– and of the most marked characteristics of his work. In this, elegance is not so much a result of form as of the cruel conjugation of the form with the material expressing it. Thus steel is treated as though it were glass, marble as though it were steel, basalt as though it were bronze and bronze as though it were plastic.

Is there anything more fragile than what is hardest? Between the goldsmith and the designer of sophisticated weapons, the perilousness of their forms often

coincides with the presence of what would be called ritual incisions, little mutilations, an exhibition of rejections that at the same time are trophies; a panoply in which the first victims are the weapons exhibited themselves. This refined confrontation of opposites is what makes Corberó's art something unique insofar as it is unmistakable...

Luis Goytisolo

ALBERT RÀFOLS-CASAMADA

Barcelona, 1923



Trained in literature and art, he has worked in the field of painting and poetry. His painting, which was figurative in an initial stage, inherits the colourist sense of the *fauvists*. In 1950 he travelled to Paris, where he lived from 1953-54. During the period between 1957 and 1963 he abandoned post-cubist figurative art and introduced a structuring of form, a period which was followed by his own interpretation of Informalism, which he enriched with the introduction of the object of the collage process (1964-68). From 1960 to 1977 his work was accompanied by a theoretical reflection open to conceptualism with an exploration of the pictorial space, formats, etc. A final period between 1978 and 1986 emphasized colour and added flexibility to the picture's compositional structure within an abstract art containing references to the landscape and the object.

Recently his painting has been refined to the utmost and is submerged in a space which is devoid of all elements. His purely mental landscapes are constructed in harmonious planes of colour

which are the result of the pure schematization of the surroundings.

...Veiled presences that take place at the point of the idea and that show themselves as a gentle passing are the forms that appear in the painting of Ràfols-Casamada; presences frozen in a brief instant, like those that are glimpsed during the contemplation of a light slumber or in the first moments of a dream. Real presences freed of their matter and their outline; the matter and the outline imposed by the reality of the waking hour. Presences redeemed of all the attributes recognized by convention and protected from the weight of their dark inexistence.

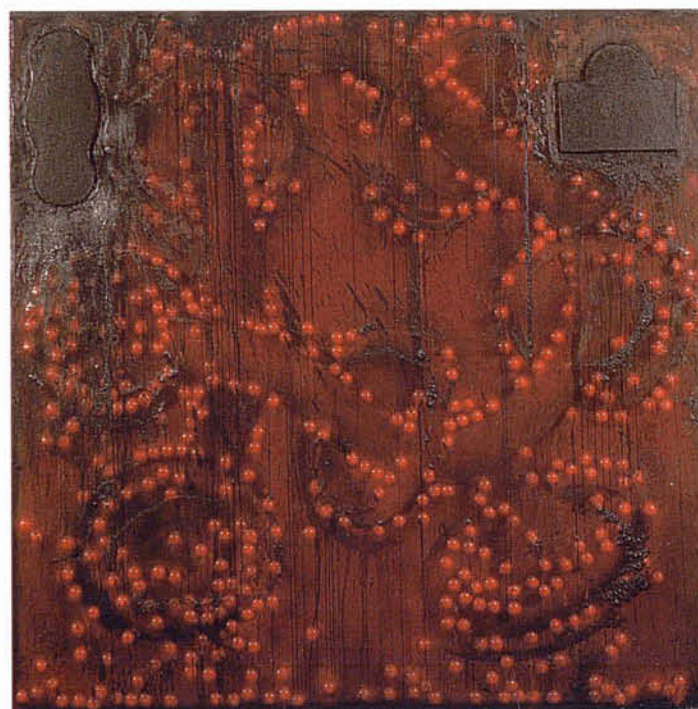
Presences full of reminiscence; sharpening reason and revealing to the imagination the reality concealed behind the appearance. Presences that are not what they are and not what they appear to be; that suggest other presences, other worlds, realities with their corresponding place in the perfect space of the idea. Presences which seem to come from far away and which, establishing themselves in the midst of the reality of things, show how much of them is real and what their true substance is. Perhaps a substance like that of dreams, yet made matter on the canvas, with its form and colour, and charged with evocation and harmony.

Albert Ràfols-Casamada has seen, has perceived and has felt reality.

Antoni Mari



GUINOVART, *METROP*, 1988. MIXED TECHNIQUE ON WOOD, 260 x 210 CM



FREDERIC AMAT, *NOCTURN ROIG*, 1990. MIXED TECHNIQUE, 187 x 187 CM



SUBIRACHS. MIL'LENARI, 1989. CALATORAO AND TRAVERTINE, 57 x 47 x 25 CM



VILADECANS. NOCTURN, 1991. MIXED TECHNIQUE ON PAPER PASTE, 195 x 185 CM

JOSEP GUINOVART

Barcelona, 1927



Trained at the Escola d'Arts i Oficis (Llotja) and at the FAD Art School, at the beginning of the fifties he made contact with the 1st Independent Art Salon, the Cercle Maillol and the experimental cycles directed by Angel Marsà. After an ingenuous period that led to an imaginary, superreal and magical reality, a visit to Madrid introduced him to the Castilian landscape. Between 1956 and 1958 there was a noticeable wish to experiment and to weigh up matter on the basis of abstract informalist trends. He took up the processes of collage and assemblage. At the end of the sixties his work underwent a tendency to reflect human, political and social issues. During the seventies he turned to the search for three-dimensionality, investigations that led to the practice of the environment. The retrospective exhibition of his work held at the Tecla Sala Metropolitan Cultural Centre at l'Hospitalet de Llobregat in December 1989 and January 1990 offered a reflection on this creator's personal universe. His work has earned him the National Prize for Plastic Arts.

...In his impassioned and continuous polemic with the irksome cultural and social reality around him, Josep Guinovart stirs up a tangle of objects, materials and situations, which he sees –as he told me in a recent conversation– not as chaos but as magma to be moulded. Far from positioning himself on the fringe of reality, then, the artist plunges into it in search of a synthesis of necessity, re-

presented by the materials he tears from it to incorporate into the picture or sculpture, and the freedom of organising them in compositions of a marked critical nature. That's why it's out of place, in his case, to speak of objets trouvés that are shown on account of their purely aesthetic or anti-aesthetic values, but of objects and materials that are representative of a situation he hopes to ward off by organising them in new groupings that change each one's previous function –aggressive, concealing or inert.

This is an art that is opposed to all imitation of crystallization and that never loses sight of the original inspiring magma, so that the work tends to go beyond the objectual limits imposed by tradition and ideally invades the exterior space. In this way, the artist's interior time, represented by the transforming reorganisation of the materials –carried out through impatience more than through disdain– gives rise to an almost explosive tension between the two spaces...

Angel Crespo



FREDERIC AMAT

Barcelona, 1952

Interested in a symbolic form of figurative art, his work takes its initial inspiration from exotic and primitive cultures and shows the impact of colours, forms and materials from popular art. Festivals, magic, rituals, and ceremonies characterize his canvases, marked by work with primitivist roots. Recently he

has been exploring and emphasizing some of the symbols from earlier periods, stressing the dramatism of his work and underlining the dialectics of opposites between life and death, especially. Flies, black birds and severed bulls' heads emphasize the sacrifice and the offering, by means of highly tactile and sensuous work with paper paste and wax.

...He wrote when he painted by hand. As he poured forth syncretic apparitions of a signic and archaic writing in an imaginary world of mind and abstract icons taken from life and art, all the new images broke out of the narrative course of the journeys: Yucatán, Oaxaca, Mexico, Manhattan, Brazil, Egypt, Haiti, Morocco, Sicily –geodesic points of a mental nomadism, suffocating and bloodstained. These places of pilgrimage for the body, so pure, had offered themselves in their impurity. And there he had discovered the inexhaustible qualities of an exceptional chromatic palette, more natural than invention, remembrance, celebration, offering, sacrifice, dread and enigma. It was the concupiscence of the eye. And in this way was born in him, at the same time, a writing that was weightless and earthly, of language and of matter, anthropological and scenographic, of labourers and virtual. When he tried to fix, in a single unit of separations, what had become traces of the memory of humanity and luminous moments of his biography, his gaze delighted in calm flight, in the same way as the irreversibility, chemical and instamic, of the numerical reversible, in the same way as semen turned into blood and blood into milk...

Vicenç Altaió

**JOAN
PERE VILADECANS**
Barcelona, 1948



He exhibited for the first time in 1969, with a very baroque work which later developed towards a dematerialization in which the main thing was to emphasize the relations between the elements, more than the elements themselves. From then on, his work became more lyrical, more poetic, more laconic, giving prominence to the object, until he arrived at the synthesis of his *Poemes centrats*, highly organised in elemental and even symmetrical constructive patterns. The treatment of the matter, with layers of paper paste, and concern for the texture and the relief structure are still his chief objectives. He has exhibited individually at the most important museums and galleries and has taken part in many group exhibitions.

...With signs, Viladecans signs the style, the identification with a mirror of his own expression. He builds the alphabet to describe everything from silence to cries, the pictorial word that communicates the senses, and argues them. Painting offers the pages of an open book, to be filled with fragments of the most intimate remembrance. Within these exclusively pictorial limits, Viladecans outlines his signographic language, and from it shapes stories, poems and pictorial evocations. At last his freedom has been recognized, this universe of signs that distinguish his discourse and diversify expression. To lay the foundations for style, a terminology of one's own, has come to be the objec-

tive of the great creators of our century. Viladecans has designed his own.

Every picture a phrase, a chapter of a message that is renewed page by page, an allegory of its passing. Each new sign, each object, each letter, colour, figure or footprint, an argument, and unifying them: the support, the objectual condition of painting. The tactile and corporeal dimension. The testimony of a constant self-manifestation, without forgetting the reference to man, to the artist as a thinker who with his painting is the vehicle for the meditative state of the gaze.

Josep-Miquel Garcia

JOSEP M. SUBIRACHS
Barcelona, 1925



Josep M. Subirachs is one of the best-known and most widely recognized Catalan artists, on both a national and an international level.

Until 1951 he reflected the influence of the *Noucentisme* which had predominated during his training, although after this date we can see a clear tendency towards a stylization of form which was to lead him into abstraction, to return, more recently, to realism. His mature work, which is sober and complex, is structured in a play of contrasts and complements which takes place both on the thematic level and on the level of the external appearance, often combining different materials, negative and positive figures, sequences in series, displacements, classical elements, etc., in a constant dialogue of opposites, a game

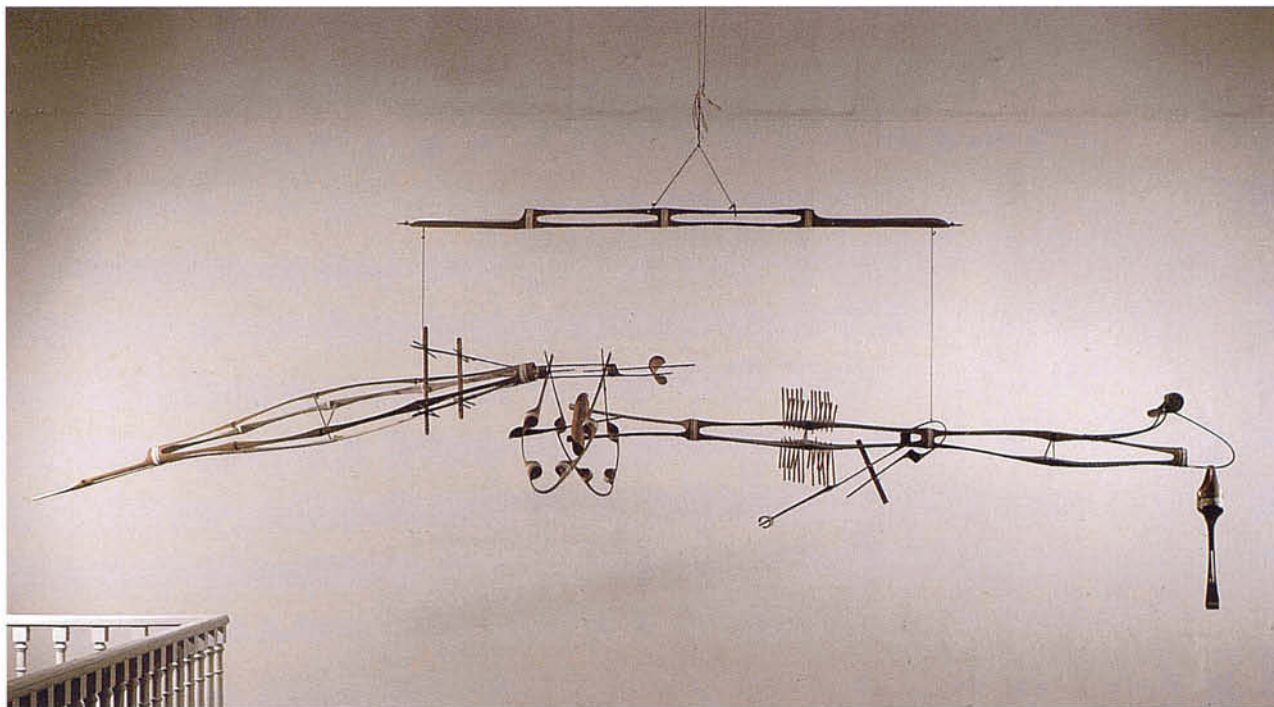
of visual contrasts and paradoxes. But he is always characterized by a great technical mastery and painstaking formal structuring.

Subirachs is the artist who has constantly brought art into the street, while fiercely defending the participation of the public in artistic creation.

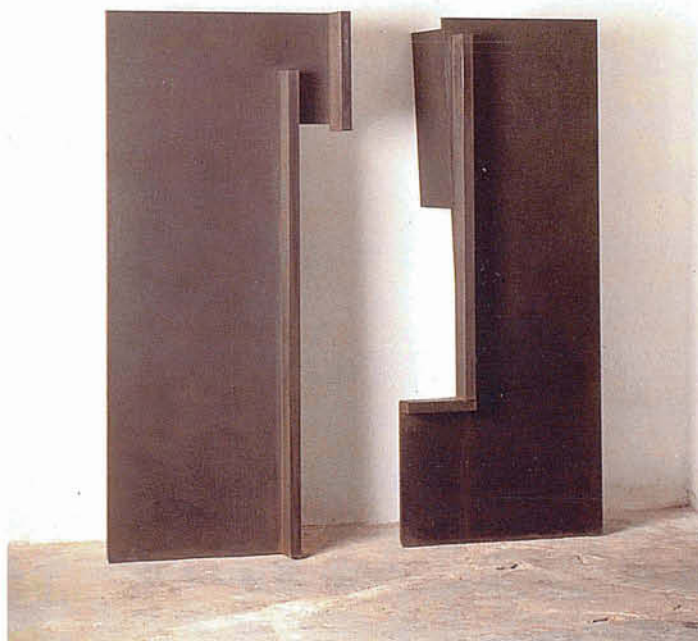
His sculpture has played both with form and concept, and has followed its own path, from an alien avant-gardism to fashions and mass artistic trends. After his abstract period, so emblematic of the new culture that was breaking out of the remains of official conventionalism, he reintroduced figurative art in the sixties, but he did so without returning to traditional concepts, combining dream, volumetric and literary elements, mixing materials and techniques. By way of example, he included painting in his sculptures, which often surpassed their natural limits and approached the realm of architecture, an art the sculptor has always said he misses.

Sometimes you might say that Subirachs is a cold realist, with a marked element of mythology in his work, something which has led him to make constant references to classical and Renaissance forms and contents, to reappraise the essential role of his sculptures' pedestals, often making them an inseparable part of the whole, and at the same time it has led him to allow free rein to the eroticism in his work, in which an obelisk can be strikingly phallic and at the same time have an impressive and tranquil classical presence...

Francesc Fontbona



MOISÉS VILLÉLIA. *MÓBIL*, 1980-82. CANE, 120 x 420 x 420 CM



SERGI AGUILAR. *INTERVAL*, 1990. STEEL, 145 x 140 x 37 CM

SERGI AGUILAR

Barcelona, 1946



He studied at the Escola Massana d'Arts Aplicades and at the Conservatori de les Arts del Llibre, in Barcelona. Since 1972 he has devoted himself exclusively to sculpture, using bronze, brass, steel and concrete, and later, Belgian black marble and iron. His work reveals a certain minimalist influence as regards the reduction of form to a minimum of expression and he works on the basis of an organic geometry. The force of his sculpture lies in the tensions, inclinations, cracks and balancing movements.

From the very beginning, geometry has been the basis for the structures of his rigid volumes, which, treated with subtle formal purity, are constructed by means of primary sculptures and formal elements, always recreated through an order that never becomes closed and rational -quite the contrary, it is in constant dialogue: sudden breaks, delicate balances, unexpected shifts, chance incisions, dislocated joins... in a balanced conjugation of tensions and of exploration of accidents.

...The archaeology of each of Sergi Aguilar's sculptures is revealed in the foundation of the form and in the sensitive appearance it takes on, its end being none other than itself. The form, as re-presentation, and therefore including at the same time the simulation of an intelligible world which is absent from the objectual world. His activity consists in forming for form's sake, free from a discourse whose immediate reference is the notion of the limit. The origin of his work lies in the geometrical

axiom conceived as a postulate to identify the eloquent silence that inhabits his formal abstruseness with corporal representations that ignore the laws of gravity and only respond to the intentions of the subject that makes them. Matter and form are the syntactic elements he articulates out of his abstraction, following the Aristotelian model, to organise a world system: the matter is space; the form, materialization of time without causality, in its infinity. The space provides the surfaces, and time produces the gesture. The space can never be the same because of the immutable action of time on it. But each piece, regardless of the size, is a compact, irreplaceable unit...

Menene Gras Balaguer

MOISÈS VILLÈLIA

Barcelona, 1928



Apart from the early pieces, containing stylized figures with a certain modernist influence, as could be seen in 1954 when he exhibited for the first time at the Museu de Mataró, it would be true to say that since 1954 his sculpture has been fully informalist, as was shown by his 1956 exhibition, which made people talk of a Mataró group made up of Villèlia and four painters. He took part in the October Salon that year, where his experimental work underwent a resounding transformation when he decided to leave behind him the trade he mastered so well and launch into experimentation. He works with inorganic materials (stones, rusty iron, string,

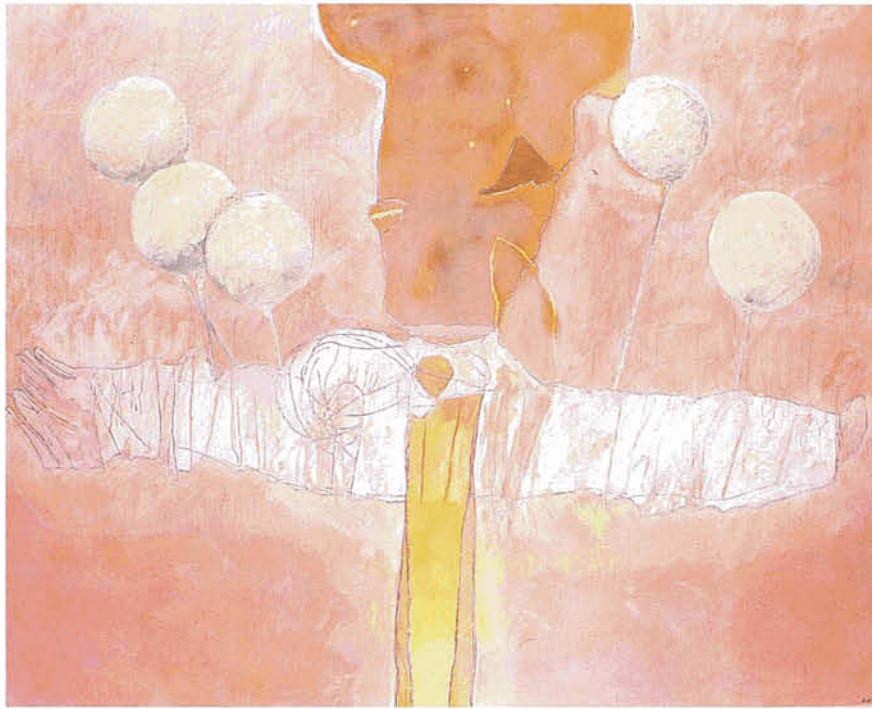
wire...), but also with organic matter (a marrow, a cactus...). In this sense, this investigation, a forerunner of *arte povera*, helped him to discover the material that characterizes him: the bamboo cane. From his canes he makes mobiles that take shape in the air and hang in the void, and renounces, in the end, the possibility of sculpture. An exhibition of Villèlia's work in 1960 inaugurated the Museum of Contemporary art provisionally installed in the Coliseum.

...The striking emergence in the fifties of Moisès Villèlia's work -unusual sculptures, exuberant, imaginative, rich in ideas, difficult and unique- was a real revelation in Catalan cultural circles.

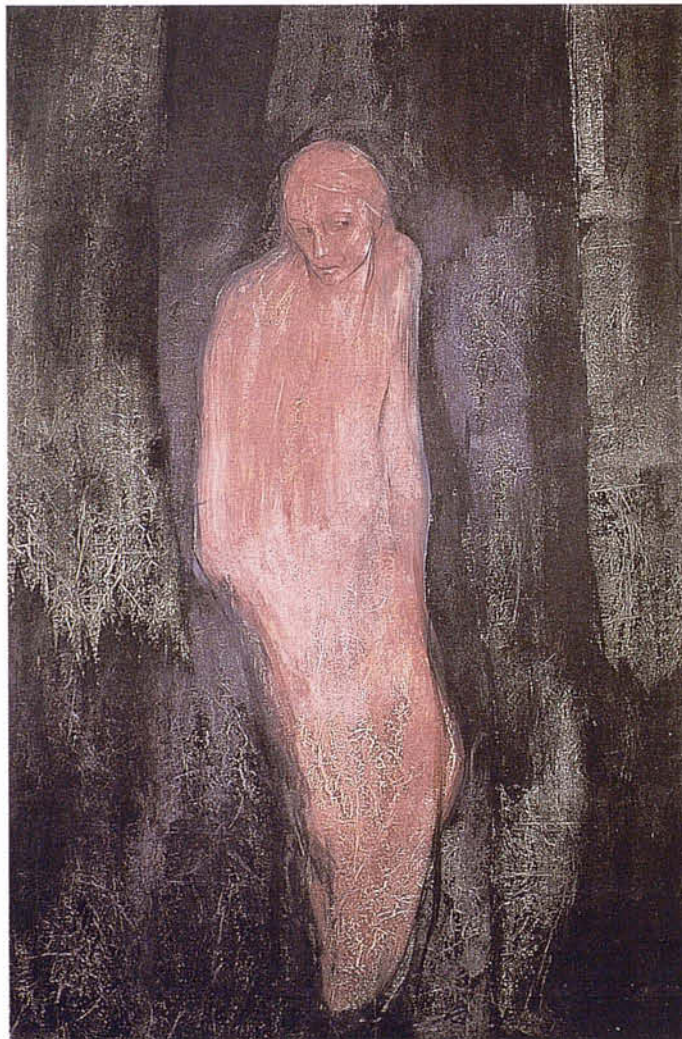
The fabulous inventiveness of his plastic forms, but more especially the skillful manipulation of bamboo, a material easily available to Villèlia at his home in Cabrils, caused an unforgettable impact. This sculptor was really one of the first people to turn his attention to humble materials, one of the first people to choose, in the second half of the century, as well as such unusual materials as bamboo and toothpicks, organic materials like a cactus, a bone or a marrow.

His love for everything he has managed to surround himself with certainly goes deep. This makes up his world, so unique, rich and personal, gathered in -finally- at Molló, on the vertical face of the mountain where he has built his home. Villèlia is more than a pioneer. He is one of those honest, upright, creative artists who do honour to a country. He is a sculptor. With no need for adjectives. There is no need to classify him. With him, Catalan sculpture reaches a level of originality, emotion and interest which has rarely been achieved in the art of our age.

Maria Lluïsa Borràs



RAFAEL BARTOLOZZI. *VENDEDOR DE GLOBOS*, 1988. OIL ON CANVAS, 170 x 215 CM



MONTSERRAT GUDIOL. *UNTITLED*, 1991. OIL ON CANVAS, 195 x 130 CM



ARRANZ-BRAVO. LOVE VICTIM, IX, 1991. OIL ON CANVAS, 100 x 81 CM



CARLOS PAZOS. ¿DÓNDE ESTÁ LA FARMACIA?, 1987. ASSEMBLAGE OF OBJECTS, 118 x 65 x 27 CM

MONTSERRAT GUDIOL

Barcelona 1933



Outside the mainstream of the trends in vogue at any given moment, Montserrat Gudiol's work has always been characterized by a marked symbolism. Her figures emerge from interior ambits, representing scenes that are frozen in time, by means of which she deepens the world of feelings. If in the fifties her work hinted at a surreal vision, the development of her language has maintained the mythical and supra-realist atmosphere of its beginnings, impregnated with a striking air of mystery. The loneliness, pain and anguish of the human being are the main focus of her discourse, a fully realist discourse that hinges on the heads and hands, elements of maximum expressiveness, while the bodies are diluted.

...Montserrat Gudiol's painting represents a clean break in Catalan post-war art, because she has wanted to venture into a world people don't usually linger in, the world of feelings. At a time when painting was concentrating on formal aspects, in the years when artists committed themselves to social struggle, this Barcelona painter concentrated on interpreting the spirit.

Montserrat Gudiol's characters are theatrical characters, because they are situated in an unreal or fictitious setting, because they make gesture, expression, their element of communication. As in the ancient Greek tragedies, as in mime, her characters reveal their state of mind and explain it to us by means of

an expression of the face, a gesture of the hands.

Montserrat Gudiol's painting is classical painting not only because it retrieves Renaissance aesthetic approaches and uses ancient pictorial techniques, but because it makes man the centre of interest of her discourse.

Montserrat Gudiol's painting is modern because it looks into the spirit of the people of today and because it makes a personal synthesis of Realism and Informalism...

Francesc Miralles



EDUARD ARRANZ-BRAVO
Barcelona, 1941

He belongs to the generation of artists who, at the beginning of the sixties, reacted to the language of abstraction and Informalism to shape a basically figurative expression which takes drawing as its academic basis and which returns to the human figure as a formal proposition and as a reflection of the social dimension.

If, during the seventies, in an explosive expansion, Arranz-Bravo delighted in the use of formal elements, during the eighties he synthesized and simplified composition, in an interior about-turn which has brought him back, in his latest work, to the complex networks of lines and shapes that dilute the image, at the same time as it is fragmented and broken down, carved up and dismembered.

The artist seems to want to keep a balance between the two opposite poles

that fight for dominance; the geometrical and the organic, restraint and growth. If the body is geometrical, the skin is organic; if the structure is built up according to strict order and method, the musculature gradually dismembers the form in a clear process of abstraction.

...True to a series of convictions, he has seen a wide range of stereotypes and fashions pass before him, though slight phases can certainly be made out within his loyalty.

The group of works to be presented in Seville is a continuation of a formal purification of those more or less figurative iconographic resorts of a surreal, obsessive, alternately dramatic and ironic type that were commonplaces of the most familiar Arranz-Bravo.

A process of purification that started to take shape after the break in the partnership the painter had kept up for more than a decade with Rafael Bartolozzi, and whose birth was announced in the splendid series entitled Pantocràtor, or in equally exemplary pieces such as Nord, Corasón de oro and Father estimat amic, all dated between 1988 and 1989.

He brings together images and lines, sequences and sketches, in the manner of a spring where the artist collects the water he then splashes over all his work. Splashes in which we sense the powerful beat of a heart that long ago noticed how a certain measured, comfortable rhythm followed after the accelerated arrhythmia provoked by a late alarm-clock one supposedly tranquil dawn. The loud heartbeats resound powerfully here...

Luis Casado

RAFAEL BARTOLOZZI
Pamplona, 1943



After exhibiting for several seasons alongside Eduard Arranz-Bravo and organising various artistic activities with him, in 1982 Rafael Bartolozzi presented work which was proof of a definitive break with his previous way of working. From this moment on he re-emerged with a clearly defined personality, but one that reaffirmed his initial language. Since then, his work has gradually acquired a certain symbolism which in some pieces connects with a pseudo-pre-Raphaelism.

The deliberate ambiguity Bartolozzi introduces into his creative work is underlined by the combination of different materials, which at times reminds one of gold- and silver-work and popular art. Forms metamorphosed in the unconscious, surfacing in the form of figures, landscapes and atmospheres, decontextualized in relation to time and space.

...Bartolozzi began his painting in abstract art and collage, but it was after his contact with the group from the Escola de Belles Arts in Barcelona, more than twenty-five years ago now, that he really started his long artistic career in neo-figurative art, with evident influences from American Pop Art and the late Surrealists. In the last ten years, there is also a certain Italian influence to be seen in his work, as expressed in his sympathy for the Italian critic Achille Bonito Oliva and the movements he organises and/or originates: Transavant-

guarda, Projecte Dolç and Superart. A sympathy, furthermore, whose formal manifestation consists in a "revitalization of figurative expression", a reading and analysis of artists like Francis Bacon and a renewed interest in man, nature and his surroundings.

Bartolozzi's painting, in its rapid evolution, leads to an accelerated synchronic reading, it becomes more etherial and diaphanous, it is automatic painting, it rejects the instant and neo-figurative formation to lose itself in the world of dreams and return to the earlier, intuitive expressiveness of the child, following the cycle of life. This world of signs is different from Miró's childlike but surreal world. Bartolozzi creates out of real events and transforms them through a personal reading into a pattern which is the expression of his current enthusiastic search for sincerity...

Joan Abelló



CARLES PAZOS
Barcelona, 1949

In the course of his long artistic career he has developed a complete mythology on personal objects. During the eighties, the practice of body art, as carried out by this artist, led to a sculptural oeuvre with a powerful poetic charge, centred mainly on the aesthetics of the everyday object, which built up a personal language as though it were a private diary. In this sense, he transfigures life through the ironic and sarcastic manipulation of everyday ob-

jects. Memories and experiences tinged with melancholy, with sensuality, and steeped in a deliberate kitsch, appear in his assemblages and constructions in a highly critical poetry that is halfway between beauty and ugliness.

...Carlos Pazos defies the order of the conventional in his leap across borders, in his obsession with making his life the contents of his art and with his unshakable look of the eternal rebel, something strange, or at least scarce, at a time of generalized ambition. Because Pazos –paradoxical as it may seem– has been more faithful to his cause than many of those who at the beginning of the seventies raised the flag of art at the service of the great ideals. With his aura of Decadence, which led him in 1976 to proclaim "I'm going to make myself a star", Pazos has become more determined in his defence of art for art's sake and more coherent in his aesthetic ideas than many of the artists of his generation.

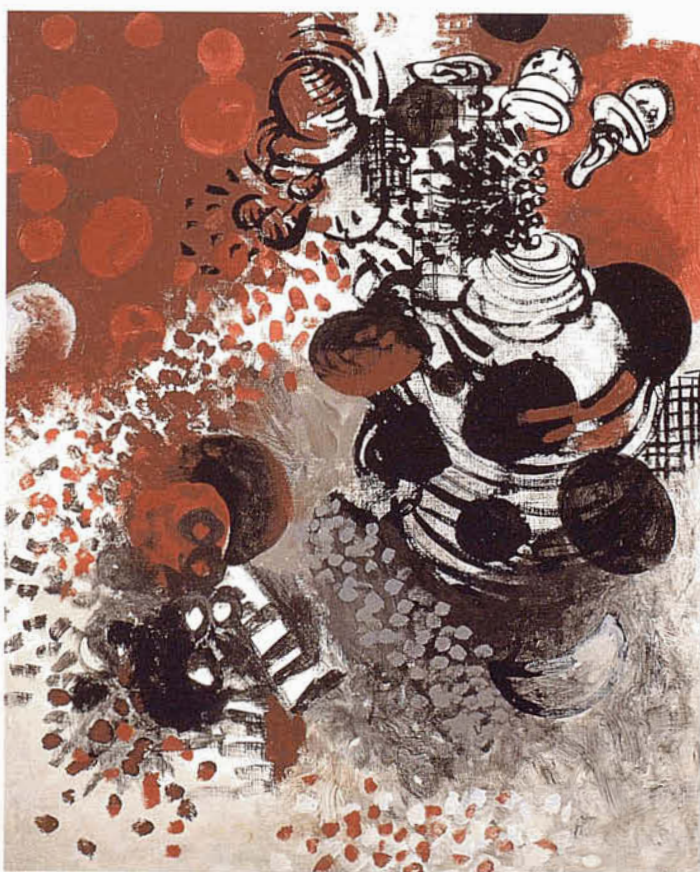
Carles Pazos's poetic is the result and the logical continuation of Dada and Surrealism: both of them brought to the art of the twentieth century the liberation of representation with their idea of the objet trouvé, which they show us in its own right, as Duchamp does, or combining two or more objects, as was to happen with Surrealism. Our artist gave rise to a new version, that of objects that make up a certain scenography, because they don't reach the level of an installation and they aren't really sculptures either.

Carlos Pazos loves his memories, he lives to remember and fix these moments for eternity.

Victoria Combalía Dexeus



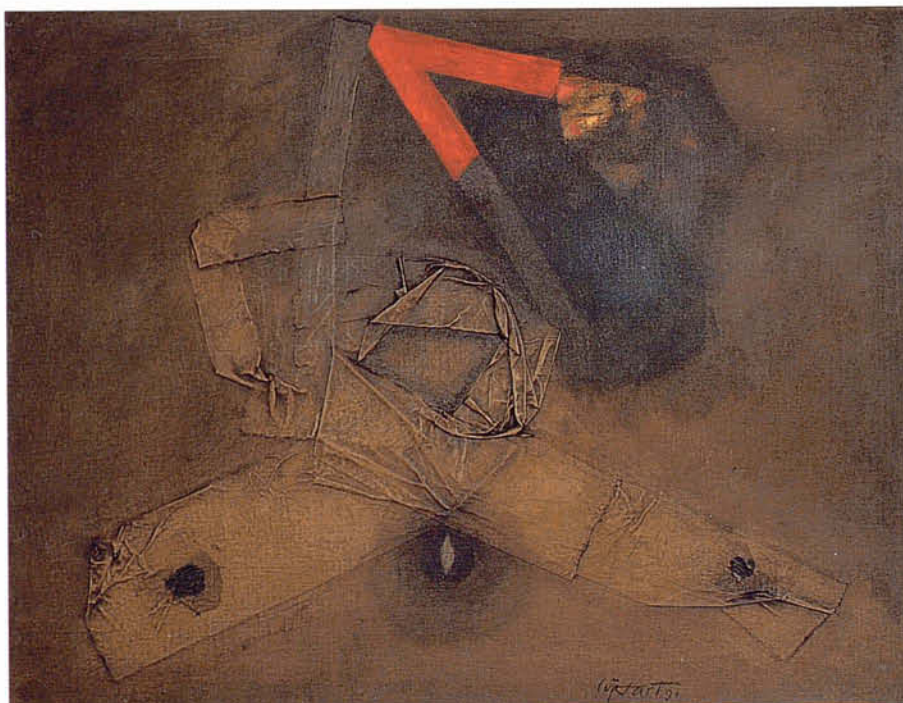
J.J. THARRATS. *VIBRATIONS*, 1987. MIXED TECHNIQUE ON CANVAS, 100 x 81 CM



XAVIER GRAU. *UNTITLED*, 1991. ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 81 x 51 CM



FRANCESC ARTIGAU, MERCAT DE SANTA CATERINA, 1988. OIL ON CANVAS, 170 x 300 CM



CUIXART. PAS A DOS, 1991. MIXED TECHNIQUE ON CANVAS, 73 x 92 CM

J.J. THARRATS

Girona, 1918



A protagonist of the avant-garde drive of the Dau al Set art and literary movement, Tharrats has never abandoned the struggle for freedom of action and for artistic renovation. Following an initial, more Surrealist period, his magicism gradually admitted shapeless marks and dense, well worked matter. Throughout his career he has concentrated on a very individual style, with extremely wide registers and continuous variations, whose strength lies in the wealth of textures, the agility of the rhythm and the distribution of the colours.

At the end of the fifties and beginning of the sixties, when he concentrated on the period that most particularly incides on "matteric", *tachista* and spatialist Informalism, he came to the crystallization of his *maculatures*, or "rejects", a technique in which he combines tradition and the avant-garde. In this respect, the automatic, spontaneous gesture and the colour that spreads and expands in a constant eruption over the surface, creates fluctuating, unstable, dynamic forms, which flow magically to the surface in the form of signs and colour.

...Tharrats delights equally in a fragment suggestive of the microcosm (sand, rocks, lava, etc.) and in succeeding in reflecting the macrocosm (universe, planets, galaxies, etc.). Both of these dimensions are present in his work.

The richness of the carefully worked textures, the agility of the constantly moving rhythms, and the subtle distribu-

tion of colours, in rich contrasts, make up a work of a volcanic dimension, in which painting disturbs other elements to transform them into signs inserted in a space as personal as it is universal.

This investigative urge has given him the chance to cultivate a wide variety of artistic techniques. As well as painting and engraving, Tharrats has worked in mural painting, sculpture, gold and silver, glass, pottery, tapestry, posters and scenography, infusing the same artistic language into each procedure.

This capacity for experimentation led him to develop his own technique, his "maculatures", with which he synthesized his investigative capacity: he uses, transforms or recreates different supports of paper or canvas, he prints on them at random over previous prints... until accumulation, superimposition and transparency result in another plastic reality transmuted by his language...

Daniel Giralt-Miracle

MODEST CUIXART

Barcelona, 1925



The figuratively oneiric iconography inherited from Surrealism and common to all the members of the Dau al Set group (1948-1951) is manifested in a very personal way in Cuixart's work, through a magical, symbolist world with rich inner realities. After this period he moved towards an informalist approach within an unmistakable abstract expressionism of material exuberance.

Scratching, scraping and dripping are techniques which he uses and of which

there are fine examples in this exhibit. At the beginning of the sixties, Cuixart once more introduced figurative elements into his work and moved towards Pop and neo-Dada ideas. Thus the exorcist figures that emerge from the dense backgrounds, and the macabre dolls, battered and burnt and stuck together in a collage, belong to this period, a period characterized by gloom and destruction.

Finally, the baroque and neo-modernist figurative art of recent years offers us sensual, frivolous presences of women in troubling allegories.

Cuixart's visit to Paris was of decisive importance for him. He had taken his first steps in Barcelona, after discovering the world of the subconscious, through the extraordinary boldnesses of "dadism" and the magical world of Surrealism's "rationalized subconscious". The Romanesque painting of the Catalan museums, some aspects of Catalan Modernism (art nouveau), and the paths followed by chosen forerunners gave Cuixart's work during that period a peculiar tone of magic realism, of refined calligraphies and bold uses of colour.

Cuixart's restlessness, however, soon led him on to new experiments. With his Set personatges d'exorcisme, which he exhibited in Paris in 1962, and the controversial exhibition at René Metras the following year (called "the doll exhibition", because of the objects used in some of the works), the language acquired a new dimension.

Cuixart's ceramic work shows his sculptural skill, his sense of the third dimension, of volume and space, as well as his very personal use of colour and his attention to the material...

Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera

FRANCESC ARTIGAU

Barcelona, 1940



Trained at the Escola Superior de Belles Arts and the Escola Llotja, in Barcelona, he first became known publicly in the sixties, when, after Informalism, there was a certain return to figurative art. He took part in the movement of the Estampa Popular Catalana, which exhibited at the Galeria Belarte (Barcelona, 1965). His figurative art is expressed through a spirit of social chronicle cloaked in irony and a critical vision, documentarily interpreting the social moment by means of an almost caricaturesque sense of everyday reality.

Artigau's series of paintings and drawings in which the life of the street is reflected become sequences punctuated by flashes that freeze movement, capturing the singularity within the social whole.

...Since his beginnings as a painter with the Estampa Popular group in the sixties, we might say that Artigau has tried his hand at Pop in a broad sense of the word: in design, in the mixture of different images and in the sophisticated forms of presentation, but especially in his ambiguous –and I would go so far as to say amoral– adhesion to an advertising and urban culture which is condemned to a life contaminated by a surfeit of conflicting ethics. His style seems to accept that description is essentially irony, and that elegant description is persuasion.

The surface of the picture becomes a space in which disparate elements come together. It isn't the definition of a specific significante, so much as of an ambi-

guous and perversely vital condition, of a predisposition to live in uncertainty. In it there are intersecting and interrupted sequences that fix events: the expressiveness of an outline, the pictorial animation of a printed dress, the sensuality of a skin in the sun, characters in a garden, people communicating, couples running in the rain, sporadic images of a television screen, travel notes, free evocations of Greek or Etruscan art, market or bar scenes, bodies on the beach and Mediterranean landscapes. A promiscuous figurative expression with a touch of humour and irony, vehemently accumulative and communicative, in which, as has been said, the recovery of the meaning of life and of history, experience and memory become indistinguishable...

Miquel Molins i Nubiola

XAVIER GRAU

Barcelona, 1951



He appeared on the artistic scene in the mid-seventies and, in his own very personal way, took up the lessons of Antoni Tàpies and American abstraction.

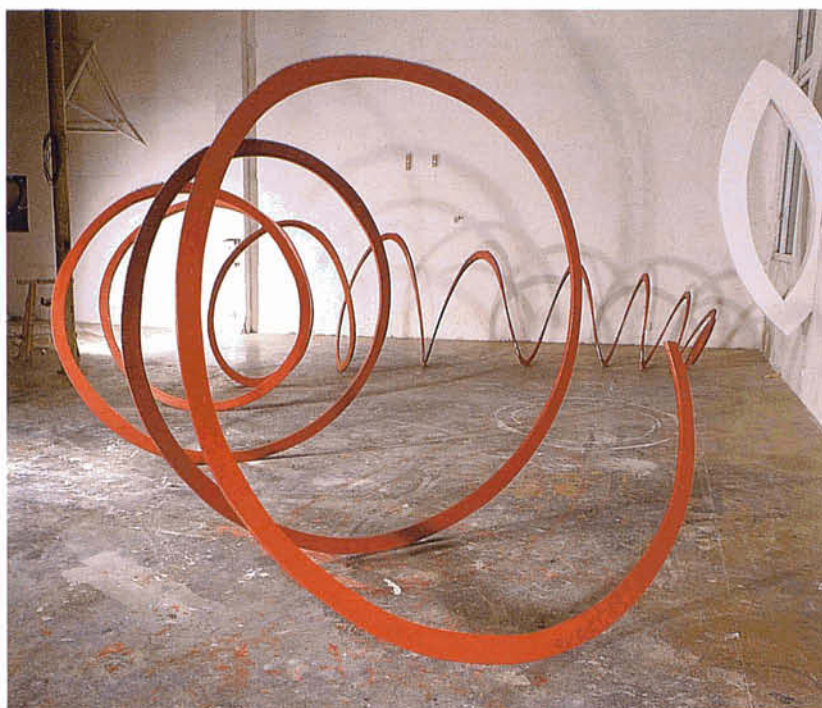
His pictorial work, which belongs to a field of abstract art where gesture and colour are the essential elements, is characterized by dense atmospheres, from which fragmented figures and objects emerge, steeped in an unreal, romantic light. The gestural and spontaneous brushstroke, alongside powerful, lively colours, characterize a work that is warm and dense in its formal configuration. He has held important individual

exhibitions and taken part in a number of significant group shows.

...Xavier Grau is one of those painters for whom painting, in its own right, becomes an inexhaustible source of new ideas and therefore of new painting. For Grau, painting is a vital necessity; it is a requirement of life, of the intellect, of existence; painting is creation and as such is the ideal means by which to communicate with the world and also to discover oneself. Painting, more than representation or symbolization of something outside the painter, is more than anything expression of his "I", a language without sounds and rich in images, which has everything and nothing to do with the surroundings that generate it and make it possible.

From his colourist and gestural compositions of the early eighties, tormented by a subtle and sometimes invisible figurative presence which was far removed from the support-surface abstract art Grau had practised up to the end of the seventies, which led him to take part in exhibitions like "Per una crítica de la pintura" and to collaborate in the group Trama, to his striking compositions of today, we hardly find a hint of real change in what we might call, not without inverted commas, style; a style, however, which, rather than repeating images like a mirror, rather than becoming affected or devoid of content, has successfully made the canvas an intense field of expressions and truths that for him are exactly that, and for us too...

Anna Guasch



TOM CARR. *RED HELIX*, 1991. PAINTED WOOD, 200 x 195 x 100 CM



MARCEL MARTÍ. *OSLUM*, 1989. BRONZE, 54 x 26 x 17 CM



ANTONI LLENA. GROC, BLANC I BLANC TRANSPARENT, 1987. COLLAGE, 126 x 126 CM



LLIMÓS. VANITAS BLAU, OIL ON CANVAS, 130 x 130 CM

MARCEL MARTÍ

Alvear, Argentina, 1925



One of the generation of artists who belonged to the second Catalan avant-garde, Marcel Martí has given groups, schools and fashions a wide berth, and concentrated on a creative development characterized at all times by the constant dialogue between instinct and reflection, between what can be felt and what can be known.

His work has gradually evolved towards an abstract art which nevertheless maintains references to reality and which is expressed as organic forms, always extracted from nature, which are based on the study of morphologies from the anthropomorphic, biological and even geological world. Figures, characters, totems... become symbols with a monumental vocation in his hands.

The constant formal tension arising from the rhythms, masses, concavities, convexities, planes, emptinesses and fullnesses is perfectly sustained thanks to the impeccable technical work with the different materials used (wood, bronze, marble, stone, polyester, glass fibre, iron, etc.), the exquisitely aerodynamic finish and the rich chromatic treatment of the surfaces, elements that give the work of Marcel Martí this plastic solidity.

...On the paths of the world and of his own life, Marcel Martí realised that what was apparently fleeting were really intangible presences, some of them pleasant, others irksome, most of them distressing. Because of his own particular idiosyncrasy, he decided to materialize them all in three dimensions, something that over time has been built up and demonstrated in his sculpture.

Looking back after forty years, Marcel Martí's sculpture shows no evolutions; it has gone from the sharp-edged, angular forms of flat or geometric volumetry to rounded forms with protuberances one could call organic, but his work has never been imitative, in spite of its search for expression, the expression that culture has poured out over the ages.

During the process of creation of his concrete images, Marcel Martí knows how to collect and put together the compositive geometrical structure with the schematic reductionism of minimal art, or else he goes from the cube to morbid organicism, dense and full of vivid meanings, though these allusions are never translatable into a living viscosity that limits the projective possibilities and the freedom with which the work can be grasped.

Marcel Martí's sculpture swings between geometrical composition and organic nature, which allows him to capture an idea and live it according to the intensity and to his entirely personal needs, and all this at the time and in the place that correspond...

Arnau Puig

TOM CARR

Tarragona, 1956



Tom Carr's experiments range from the early ephemeral and immaterial projections with fleeting rays of light on architectural elements, the first constructions worked out on paper with bars of graphite and the familiar architectural structures in wood suggesting imaginary buildings and monuments, to the pres-

ent period, with a lighter, far more ethereal and dynamic type of sculpture. Even so, those studies of perspective, that constant anamorphous distortion, those shifts of axes and volumes, that feeling for archetypal geometrical forms now condense in volumes that are imposing but do not dominate the space.

In his previous constructions, which took us back to an ancestral past with Towers of Babel, ziggurats, mastabas, pyramids, ramps, pinnacles..., Tom Carr frequently concentrated on the theme of steps, of useless staircases, drawing out his spirals and curves to the unlikely limit of leaving them hanging in mid-air without leading anywhere.

...In his early works, the luminous forms distorted by reflection in mirrors or the obliquely projected shadows activated the architecture of the exhibition space at the same time as they questioned the certainty of one's perception. Later on, the anamorphic procedure was extended to include signs, symbols, images and colours, all drawn by the high resolution of the luminous surroundings.

The immateriality of light is replaced by the solid outlines of wood, twisted or curved to an impossible degree.

Tom Carr looks into the inherent freedom of the genuine configurative process, magnifying a multidirectional dialectic that contains in its unpredictable amalgam all kinds of relations between the artistic elements. In his latest work, a certain simplification has taken place, at the same time as the presence of very simple forms is emphasized. Nevertheless, the importance of the scale of perception and especially the relative positions of the pieces are underlined more forcefully and with care not to fall into any kind of gratuitous rhetoric. It is as though the artist were inviting the spectator to realise that true plasticity lies in the means of creation and not so much in the motives, as if he were

claiming a territory with a subjectivity of intense but meagre expression that convention usually gives little consideration to...

Gloria Moure



ANTONI LLENA
Barcelona, 1942

A self-taught artist, from 1966 to 1969, approximately, he formed part of a conceptual universe fully integrated in the spirit of *arte povera*. His experiments are amongst the earliest and most interesting of those that took place during the sixties in relation to this poor art and with the ephemeral nature of the materials used.

His work was based on shadows drawn on the wall, paper sculptures, boxes that have to be destroyed to see the work, paintings with talcum powder, etc. This period became gradually more radicalized until it took up a decidedly critical stance which led him to voluntarily abandon any kind of public showing of his art, just at the time of the great explosion in conceptual art in general. At present, he cuts up and sticks together pieces of paper as the extension of his particular view of the world of art.

...Faced with this situation, Antoni Llena's artistic production is especially significant, since it is a radical criticism of any kind of formalist dogmatism. Even when he joins in the game of art, his works still maintain their capacity for opposition, they are not seen indisputably as art, and therefore get in the way of their integration in the heteroge-

neous and decontextualizing paradigm that characterizes our age.

The choice of material is as important for an artist creating a collage as that of the subject-matter for the painter. The fact that Llena works with paper is therefore significant: his work takes on an obvious air of fragility and obsolescence. But these bits of paper, which have been stuck together and trimmed, also seemed to have been recycled from an earlier use, which gives his work a sense of permanence and durability that contrasts with the first impression. We are looking at an ambiguous oeuvre which once again occupies a fringe position and which therefore can not be assimilated or "tagged" in one line or another.

This ambiguity is what allows us to understand Llena's work beyond all formalism. This artist's work is anti-formal, it turns its back on style. His pieces from the eighties can not be ascribed to a constructivist tradition, and neither can his current work be associated with the modern traditions of automatism...

Manuel J. Borja-Villel

ROBERT LLIMÓS
Barcelona, 1943



Son of the painter Camil Llimós, his training was initially academic. He studied at the Escola de Dibuix Amadeu Prats, the Escola Massana and the Escola Superior de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi, in Barcelona. During an initial period coinciding with a return to figurative art, in the sixties, he practised the new figurative art before going on, very briefly, to a sporadic conceptual expression during the period 1969-1973. His defin-

itive return to expressionist figurative painting was marked by a very singular and personal stamp. In 1975 he moved to New York, a city he was to share with Barcelona for a long time. On the basis of his mastery of all plastic art's resources, Llimós's recent work belongs within a hieratic figurative art, coloured with a certain Mediterranean archaism which he has also introduced into his sculptural language.

...I propose two ways of looking at a painter like Robert Llimós and his relations with the real or imagined world around him: as a conjurer or as a stray dog, in the same emblematic sense that one could see Picasso as a harlequin or saltimbanque, or that –as a dog– the poet Dylan Thomas was able to imagine himself in his autobiography Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog. These of course are allegories or figures which they themselves, Llimós and Picasso, have built up through their frequent use of the respective topics. In the first case, that of the harlequin, we can suppose, according to Jean Starobinski, that the poet or artist identified himself with it in the Baudelarian sense of "the actor who conceals a desperate soul beneath his triumph and his pretence happiness". One essential aspect of Llimós's painting is the strange behaviour of objects and people in his works. The space, which is barely defined, usually adopts an attitude of indifference to them, or, if you like, one of neutrality, which could almost be described as ironic. It's not strange to find objects or people levitating or being strangely and fragmentarily driven along within this space. And in this space, people can only show themselves through isolated gestures and expressions, or, if they appear in their entirety, they do so with interruptions that are like hiatuses in their outlines...

Rafael Santos Torroella



ZUSH. JARVIS KILLER, 1986. MIXED TECHNIQUE ON CARTOON, 118,3 x 88,6 CM



PEREJAUME. PINTURA I REPRESENTACIÓ (DELTA DE L'EBRE), 1989. PHOTOGRAPH, 150 x 150 CM



CLAVÉ. COLLAGE DEL FAUNE (1985), COLLAGE ON CANVAS, 195 x 130 CM

ZUSH

Barcelona, 1946



By name Albert Porta, and self-taught, he first made himself known with the exhibition "Al·lucinacions", in 1968, when he adopted the name Zush. In 1975 he had his first contact with New York, a city which since then he has shared with his home in Barcelona. His early work belonged to Pop Art –phosphorescent, psychedelic, underground painting–, at times coinciding with the surrealist vein of Dau al Set. Zush has built up a language of his own, creating an interior, magical world which explores the duality between the universe as a totality and the world as an individuality. In this respect, he has created the State of Zushlàndia (1980) and the Evrugo Mental State (1983). He took part in the exhibition "Barcelona-París-New York. El camí de dotze artistes catalans 1960-1980" (1985). In 1989 the Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya organised the exhibition "Els llibres de Zush", which brought together almost all his books and notebooks, in which he develops the basis of his whole iconography.

...Zush is probably one of the few examples left –and persevering– of

what in their day were called "individual mythologies", and not because of the well-known case of his now famous Evrugo Mental and all the flags, paper money, identity documents and other signs of a private state (of siege) of his own, but because of the uniqueness of the ways in which he acts. Zush's work is nothing like what we usually think of as art, and yet at the same time it is entirely. Everything appears in this ceaseless, unstoppable production –drawings, paintings, books, engravings– and none of it is subject to the traditional list of categories. As an artist, Zush turns to his own artistic status –though a reinvented one–, from which all his operations emerge; as a work of art, his production appeals to the dynamics of the subject to establish itself in a discourse that is personal and autonomous –in this sense, perpetually autoreferential– which introduces itself without waiting to be asked, and not so as to take part in the contextual problems of the productive devices, but to affect the spectator's intellectual sphere, thereby becoming a sort of private action –a duel– we could call a brain to brain, an image which, by the way, however recurrent, is nevertheless symptomatic of a whole way, not only of acting, but, basically, of understanding the creative act from his original a priori starting point...

Manel Clot

PEREJAUME

Sant Pol de Mar, 1957



Half way between poetry and art, Perejaume's work can in a way be seen as the heir to Joan Brossa's object-poems. Since the first half of the eighties, his investigations have centred basically on the representation of the landscape, thanks to the use of metaphor and the manipulation of images as in the collage technique. While originally his work was marked by a certain magical surrealist influence, it has gradually become far more conceptual and grown away from the subject of landscape, demanding a far more direct participation on the part of the spectator.

He recently published the essay *Ludwig-Jujol* (1989).

...From the balcony of modernity, Perejaume looks out on the shaken sky of Modernism. Taking up the thread of those who went before him, his view over the realm of dreams has more to do with the adventure of the late nineteenth century than with that of the Super-realism which, in the twenties, explored the guilty inter-war subconscious. But in spite of this, there are blood-ties that can't be denied. In the art of Perejaume you will no doubt find

at least a resemblance, a family likeness, to Dalí's melting clocks, the almost terrifying expanses of René Magritte or the mysterious monuments of Giorgio de Chirico. But his primogenital line goes back further than this: to Wagner and Ludwig, Gaudí and Jujol.

Let's make no bones about it: the world, when all is said and done, and in spite of everything, is poetry; and Perejaume knows it. That's why the landscapes his eyes contemplate become disturbing postcards that lead you on breathtaking adventures. Reality and dream, vision and metaphor. He knows that, at bottom, the secret of real magic doesn't consist in making the dream come true, but on the contrary, of making reality become a dream...

Josep M. Llompart



ANTONI CLAVÉ
Barcelona, 1913

This artist has lived almost all his long and concentrated career in France, where he settled in the forties. Antoni Clavé found in the Paris school his initial chance to develop an art he has never stopped investigating with genuinely

original results in the field of painting, sculpture, engraving and tapestry. The one-to-one fight he maintains with his work manifests itself in different ways: in the manipulation of the matter and in its finish, in the driving strokes of colour from which the pigment runs and drips dramatically, and also in the printing of a wide range of elements. The repeated use of *trompe-l'oeil* (optical illusions) and of discarded objects which the passage of time has aged and deteriorated are other constants in his creative work. In 1984, in acknowledgement of his work, he was awarded the Generalitat de Catalunya's Gold Medal.

The retrospective exhibition presented at the Palau Robert by the Department of Culture at the beginning of 1990 provided a chance to evaluate his creative development and the dynamic continuity that characterizes it.

...Meanwhile, triumphant, totalitarian Francoism had the gall to establish an aesthetic by decree, and all avant-garde experiments were labelled a result of the degeneration of art. Clavé was a painter lost in occupied France, trying to connect with the free art that lived on in the subsoil of the occupation. His friendship with Picasso allowed him to connect directly with the inner logic of the avant-garde, while in Spain art that broke with convention was practically clandestine and groups like Dau al Set or El Paso were not to appear until

the end of the forties or almost the fifties.

Clavé has already found his calligraphy, his system of signs in which ornamentalism is no more than a subjective evaluation by a busybody who knows his past as a poster artist. It isn't ornamentalism. It's a prodigious retina, as knowledgeable in the structuring of the picture space as in the use of colour, a retina that incorporates the "matteric" from the drama of the experiments with which contemporary art and literature show the insecurity on which they destroy themselves so as to construct themselves. The collage isn't simply a declaration of mixed breeding or a hotch-potch of double-meanings. Collage is the representation of doubt as to the meaning of contemporary art, just as in Clavé the alternation of painting, illustration, theatrical decoration, sculpture and tapestry expresses an urge to search for or find the medium and the space to force the evolution of the language.

From the poster artist for Hollywood films that lives on in the memory of the passers-by who were his contemporaries, to this seventy-nine-year-old artist fighting against the aesthetics of his melancholy, we witness the growth process of one of the great creators of this end-of-millennium, an exception against a backdrop of artists who calculate and exploit the time left to them for administering their calligraphy...

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán