



Exhibition: **Carmen Calvo**
IVAM-Centre Julio González
29th November 2007 – 20th January 2008

Organized by: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

Curator: Consuelo Císcar and Emmanuel Guigon



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The exhibition “Carmen Calvo” offers a survey of the artist’s last 15 years of work and brings together 122 art works consisting of installations, drawings, objects, paintings, and large format photographs. The show is organized through the conceptual axes defining a plastic research derived from complex personal experiences: the studio, Archaeology, childhood, the look. On occasion of this exhibition, the IVAM has published a catalogue containing images of the works exhibited and including texts by the curators of the exhibition, Consuelo Císcar, director of the IVAM, and Emmanuel Guigon, Director of the Museum of Besançon; film historian Nancy Berthier; writer Georg Sebbag; art historian Thierry Dufrene; and writer Ferran Muñoz. This exhibition is the second one the IVAM devotes to this artist after the show organized at the Centre del Carne in 1990.

The exhibition features a journey through Carmen Calvo’s work and arranges the different series according to the diverse thematic axes and techniques used by the artist during the last two decades of her artistic career.

In the first rooms of the exhibition, the artist’s pictorial and object universe is displayed through paintings, collages and installations such as the one entitled “En el centro”. Like a preface of the set of works at the exhibition, it recalls the

artist's studio, her workbench and the selves hosting the materials her creations spring from. In the second room, a section is devoted to the series of blackboards, which are used to refer an object and metaphysical world from the past. Then, the series of paintings, sculptures and glass cabinets with objects lead to a room featuring a set of drawings on printed papers gathering a heterodox world of images stemmed from her paintbrush. The exhibition ends with a series of large artistically modified photographs by superimposing objects and paint.

Carmen Calvo is one of the most prestigious and internationally renowned Spanish artists. Born in Valencia in 1950, she took part in the generation of artists responsible, in the 70's of the 20th century, for a real review of the aesthetic principles inherited from Informalism and from what is known as *Crónica de la Realidad* of the late Franco era. This new generation of young artists represented the burst of a new way of understanding the artistic practice which insisted on the necessity to recover the subjective "I" and the development of an art where plastic research, intimate experiences and ludic, even humoristic spirit, become the driving force of creation.

In view of the attacks to painting by Conceptual Art, Carmen Calvo fought for maintaining critically the creative parameters of painting, but transforming them so that she has since turned her work into an original, open proposal to the combination of different languages such as drawing, installation, sculpture or photography.

In all Carmen Calvo's work, which is noticeably influenced by Surrealism, outstands the urge for a kind of *Archaeology of the rest* since its origins up to the present. The transfer of this discipline methodology to art's territory leads to a continuous meditation on the concept of the expiration of life and art, but especially to a struggle for reconstructing —through different objects from flea markets, among them photographs from anonymous family albums— the memory of a daily, lost universe due to time evolution. In her art pieces, this *reconstruction* work requires a patient process of material gathering and found fragments association and structuring, that is, in other words, a real arbitrary and imaginative process of organization of signs finally culminating in the creation of an image with a high power to recall.