

EXHIBITION: *Alejandro Corujeira, lo que crece y nos invita*

ORGANISED BY: IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern  
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SPONSORED BY: Bancaja

The exhibition *Alejandro Corujeira, lo que crece y nos invita* that will be held in the Sala de la Muralla at the IVAM until 7th May comprises a total of 58 works: 32 acrylics on canvas, 13 mixed media on paper and 13 watercolours on paper.

Some of the most outstanding pieces shown are *Prométeme un sueño*, 2005, and *La Muralla*, 2006, a site-specific piece designed for the Sala de la Muralla at the IVAM. Furthermore, he has made two other pieces for this space, which will be placed on the front wall at the end of the gallery, *Un paisaje en tu mente*, 2005, and *Sólo en tu mente*, 2006, incorporating circular elements, and *El traslado de los sueños*, 2005, where he started to incorporate circular elements although they were very focused.

A complete catalogue will be brought out for the exhibition with texts about the works written by Guillermo Solana and Consuelo Císcar.

Alejandro Corujeira (Buenos Aires, 1961). The central value of his painting resides in his desire to create situations that belong exclusively to the painterly world. His early work was very much influenced by Torres García, by Corujeira's inherent need to meditate and construct by addressing the architectural principles in Torres García's poetics.

In 1991, Alejandro Corujeira settled in Madrid, and from then onwards showed a more and more open lyricism, very much in the line of Paul Celan's allegoric landscapes. In time these constructive elements moved into the background, and the foreground was taken over by calligraphic elements typical of serigraphy, alongside organic, vegetable and aquatic motifs that become transformed into real volumes on the canvas. In 1998 he was named Young Artist of the Year by the Argentinian Art Critics Association.

Awarded with numerous national and international prizes, his work is present in many museums and private collections all over the world: Colección Unión Fenosa (La Coruña), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Panamá, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Imber, Fundación Cola-Cola (Madrid), IVAM (Valencia), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), Colección Banco de España (Madrid), Museo Municipal de Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Madrid), Academia Española de Historia, Arqueología y Bellas Artes (Rome), Calcografía Nacional (Madrid), Museo Postal y Telegráfico (Madrid), Zamora City Council, Colección Todisa (Barcelona), and many others.

Alejandro Corujeira has painted geometries that, in his own words, alluded to "maps, navigation charts or imaginary heavenly bodies". But for the last few years he has gradually, almost imperceptibly, been moving away from the geometric matrix. And the place at which he has arrived is a world that he enigmatically calls "what grows and invites us". This phrase encapsulates everything that is alive. The best image of this change can be seen in the recent works where sinuous outlines appear in a bed of ovoid shapes that evoke the biomorphic language of Arp, Miró or the late

Kandinsky. Corujeira has gone from the domain of the square to the silhouette of the amoeba.

For some time now, the artist has been painting labyrinths. Before they were built mazes, with parallel, concentric strips, like castles made up of a series of walls fitting into each other. Now, however, they are labyrinths that grow, vegetable mazes like jungles or animal mazes like anthills, which belong to the domain of things that creep and proliferate, of the amazing and rather frightening multiplication of life.

The labyrinth is related to swathes, ropes, bonds and fetters. In his studies about Indo-European mythology, Georges Dumézil distinguishes between two divine archetypes depending on the weapons they use. Indra, in the first place, is the warlike god who wields the sword and cuts through knots. The god Varuna, on the other hand, represented with a rope in his hands, is the one who ties, the master of bonds, of knots, with which he fastens men to their land, their time and their destiny. Alejandro Corujeira's painting no doubt belongs within Varuna's realm.

The ropes, tentacles and serpentine hair of the Gorgon are magic instruments. They can serve to tie or untie, to trap or set loose victims of spells. They can be the arms of awful powers but also a means to defend oneself from those same powers, from the spirits that lie in ambush and from the evil eye. In ancient Japan, the paths leading into the houses were built in twisted, zigzag shapes to make the demons lose their way and prevent them from entering the home. The knotwork or interlace pattern in Celtic illumination, such as the famous *Book of Kells*, was believed to have protective virtues. Malign spirits that entered these intertwined, overlapping, meandering paths were believed to become dizzy and

hypnotised from their twists and turns and lose their will or their power to carry out their evil designs.

“The space in my paintings,” Alejandro Corujeira says, “attempts to prevent the eye from standing still.” What the painter proposes is to lead our gaze along the lines of paint, making it twirl and spin, retrace its steps and dance to the rhythm of his music. Because a stare constitutes a threat, the weapon of envy, of destructive desire inserted in the terrain of the Other. Corujeira himself quotes a passage by Lacan where he speaks of the “universality of the evil eye”. There the psychoanalyst affirms that “at least in most paintings, the painter gives something to those who go to see his work that we could sum up as follows: ‘Do you want to look? Well, here you are then, look at this!’ The painter invites the people before the painting to surrender their gaze, just as arms are laid down in surrender. This is the pacifying, Apollonian effect of painting.”

As the artist himself says, “My latest works belong in the transit between language and things that change. By constant and subtle alterations I gave up the geometries that then alluded to maps, navigation charts or imaginary heavenly bodies; to open up a world that exists on the other side of the will: *what grows and invites us.*”