

Exhibition: **FUENTES (FOUNTAINS)**  
Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, IVAM  
19<sup>th</sup> July – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2006

Curators: Consuelo Císcar & Rafael Sierra

Sponsored by: Fundación Astroc

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The exhibition consists of six fountains situated on the steps of the IVAM until 14th October; they are site-specific works by the artists Alberto Corazón, Evelyn Hellenschmidt, José Sanleón, dEmo (Elado de Mora), Alicia Martín and Carlos Cuenllas.

Alicia Martín's proposal is a homage to the fountains that appear in literature, while José Sanleón exalts rivers, through which water flows as fleetingly as our lives go by. dEmo presents two of his bears as the principal motif in his design. For his part, Carlos Cuenllas pays tribute to irrigation ditches, a very important element in Valencia, as old as farming. Alberto Corazón endows his fountain with an air of the past and finally, Evelyn Hellenschmidt's work represents a disconsolate man walking along her fountain in pursuit of great things, "Water as a major raw material, as a point of union between peoples and regions and a source of culture".

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue with reproductions of the works displayed and texts by Rafael Sierra and Consuelo Císcar. It also contains texts by the artists participating in the exhibition and their CVs.

If we are to believe what it says in *The Book of Genesis*, water originated in Paradise. In our days, fountains are a glory of bygone days, the ornament

par excellence of Baroque gardens, a relic of a time when water sprang up in them as though from a well to embellish Neptune, Cybele and the other protagonists of thoroughfares and avenues. Because the fountain, apart from being the most characteristic ornament in Baroque gardens, is perhaps the most splendid and sumptuous of urban decorations.

So the air of the past that Alberto Corazón gives to ponds when he explains his design for this new tribute the IVAM pays to fountains is common to us all. Because in our childhood years we all felt the same fascination for the liquid element as this artist does. Corazón describes it as follows, “one of the most delightful memories of my infancy”.

Nonetheless, water also forms part of the future. It is one of the parameters of sustainable development. “Water is life, it is a major raw material, it is energy, it is a point of union between peoples and regions, it is the germ of civilisation and a source of culture, as it says on the first pages that inspire this event. Above all it is a symbol of a great many necessary and universal things. Concern for water is a recurrent theme in numerous institutions.”

This same concern seems to impregnate Evelyn Hellenschmidt’s work. Here a forlorn man wanders along the receptacle, the basin, of this artist’s fountain. We might say that Hellenschmidt’s lonely hero could be any one of us sallying forth in pursuit of great objectives, of the future where our development is not based on continual attacks on the environment in which our civilisation has lived since the Industrial Revolution.

In *Coplas a la muerte de su padre*, Jorge Manrique, one of the greatest poets of the wonderful 15<sup>th</sup> century period, wrote, “Our lives are rivers that run towards the sea, which is death”. These are the rivers Sanleón seems to refer to in his proposal, an exaltation of the current of those waters that run through rivers as fleetingly as our lives go by. The fountain itself, with its constant flow of water, seems to us to be a subtle imitation of a river and, according to the poet, of life itself. These fountains mentioned on so many

pages of ancient wisdom –as Edgar Allan Poe called them– seem to be present in Alicia Martín’s design, a homage to the fountains that appear in literature.

Always preoccupied with making the working world more entertaining with his art, dEmo presents two of his bears as the main motif of his proposal. Carlos Cuenllas’s design is as deeply rooted in reality as the hydrological schemes our politicians so often discuss. It is a cube that pays homage to irrigation ditches, a procedure for watering the land as old as farming, but yet so important in Valencia that we have the Water Tribunal, an object of pride in the community, now paying a second tribute to fountains thanks to the IVAM.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

Alberto Corazón (Madrid, 1942)

Painter, sculptor and designer. Studied Sociology and Economic Science between 1960 and 1965. When he finished his university studies, at the same time as he learnt drawing and painting, he founded the publishing house Ciencia Nueva with a group of friends and began to work as a designer. At this time too he held his first painting exhibitions in Turin and Milan.

dEmo (Mora, Toledo, 1960)

A self-taught artist who has been painting and drawing since his early childhood, his work shows a clear desire to take art out of the galleries that so zealously guard it from the general public. Because of his persistence in abolishing the exclusivity related with art, he prefers to display his works on the facade of museums rather than inside them. His *Ajuntamiento de osos* (Gathering of Bears), an installation located on the facade of Getafe Town Hall in 2004, was visited by 5000 more people than if it had been

exhibited in a gallery inside. Shows like *Madrid 2M12*, an installation set up at the main entrance into the Recinto Ferial Juan Carlos I (IFEMA) in 2005, or *Coches* (Cars), inaugurated in the same place a few months later, are also among his favourites.

Evelyn Hellenschmidt (Eltville, Hessen, Germany, 1962)

Moved to Spain in 1986. Has participated in international symposiums held in Toledo, Medana (Slovenia), Ehringer (Germany), Santander, Benicasim, Madrid or Siniy Vrh (Slovenia), among others. Besides, she has won many awards and grants, such as the IV Bienal de Artes Plásticas in Alcorcón, the Certamen Nacional de Pintura y Escultura (Real Sitio y Villa de Aranjuez), the Caja España Prize from Zamora, the Caja Guadalajara Prize, the Villa de Madrid Prize, the first prize in Confemetal (Madrid), the II Bienal Rafael Boti (Córdoba) and the V Muestra de Vanguardia Andaluza, Fundación Rafael Alberti (Cádiz).

Carlos Cuenllas (León, 1969)

Carlos Cuenllas, who has worked with all types of materials throughout his career, here uses light, porspan and stainless steel. The cold appearance of the steel tubes is characteristic of Carlos Cuenllas's work. They are structures made in his studio although they look as though they have been industrially produced, since each piece has an objectual, factory-made appearance. Stability and the relationship between the axes of symmetry are well-studied features. The metal bonds that connect the cylinders centre the work in space and soften its geometries.

Alicia Martín (Madrid, 1964)

Alicia Martín was born in Madrid in 1964. She has used media like photography, sculpture, installations, drawing or, more recently, video. One

of the features that characterise her work is the almost obsessive use of the book as a raw material. The metaphor of time, the occupation of space, the relationship of contemporary art with culture, the bibliographic memory as a physical representation of knowledge, or ethics to challenge everything that is taught are some of the elements that form her imaginary.

José Sanleón (Catarroja, Valencia, 1953)

José Sanleón made his “sudden and brilliant” appearance in the eighties, precisely at a time of revival of painting inside and outside Spain based on the expressive retrieval of languages from a great variety of traditions. This revival was accompanied by a young generation of artists (including this author) who were interested in the new subjectivity connected with painting and promoted it.

In 1993 Sanleón held a one-man exhibition at the IVAM, although he has also exhibited his works at the Galleria Il Capricornio in Venice, the Galleria De Crescenzo in Rome, the Galleria Otto in Bologna, the Museo Luis Cuevas in Mexico, the Centro Wilfredo Lam in Havana (Cuba), ARTEBA in Buenos Aires (Argentina) and the Palazzo Medici Riccardi in Florence, among other places.