



Exhibition: **Gerardo Rueda: The Imaginary Museum**  
IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern  
15<sup>th</sup> November 2007 – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Organized by: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

Curator: Francisco Calvo Serraller

In collaboration with:



Sponsored by:



-----

The exhibition **The Imaginary Museum** presented at the IVAM and at the Museo de la Ciudad shows 455 pieces from the artist Gerardo Rueda's private collection, consisting of both art works and diverse objects acquired in flea markets and antique shops.

The wide variety and number of pieces composing Gerardo Rueda's collection make difficult to draw a map of the "imaginary museum". It is outstanding the coexistence of a very wide set of antique objects (313 pieces) exhibited at the Museo de la Ciudad de Valencia, along with a Spanish contemporary art collection shown at the IVAM (142 pieces) including works by Fernando Zóbel, Gustavo Torner, Carmen Laffón, José Guerrero, Eusebio Sempere, Álvaro Feito, Manuel Millares, Antonio Saura, Pablo Palazuelo, and Jorge Teixidor, among others, as well as drawings by Solana, Julio González, Vázquez Díaz, Benjamín Palencia, Antonio López, and Esteban Vicente. The two catalogues published on occasion of the show contain the works exhibited and include texts by Rita Barberá, Major of Valencia, Consuelo Císcar, director of the IVAM, Francisco Calvo Serraller, curator of the exhibition, José Luis Rueda, President of the Fundación Gerardo Rueda, Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, professor of Fine Arts at the University of Oporto, and Manuel Trujillo.

The exhibition shows these works' relation to a little known aspect of Gerardo Rueda's life —his facet as collector— and reveals the artist's affinities, who as a collector expanded his interest towards the most varied means of expression, times or types of image.

Also remarkable is the fact that this gathering of works from different periods allows us to examine very different items and examples such as a number of designs of antique frames (about 700) ranging from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; over 200 18<sup>th</sup> century stained-glasses from La Granja; many examples of the very rich Spanish carving; Oriental, Chinese and Japanese pottery; diverse pieces of antique furniture, especially beautiful Carlos IV chest of drawers; a head from the Tang dynasty; an Angkor head; a Nefertiti head; Roman relics ranging from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B. C to the 10<sup>th</sup> century A. D (a collection encompassing almost all periods of Art History such as Egyptian period, Roman period, Romanic, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclastic, etc) and being only comparable to those at the Ludwig Museum of Vienna; as well as a set of various hundreds of Spanish and foreign art works by artists such as Julio González, with a curious series of drawings, Zóbel, Torner, Guerrero, Millares, Palazuelo, Antonio López, Sempere, Steinberg, Sorolla, Teixidor, Feito, Mompó, C. Laffón, Solana, Vázquez Díaz, B. Palencia, R. Opisso, Gordillo, Campano, and Bonifacio Alfonso, among others, to which Dürero's and Rembrandt's engravings should be added. All these items show the features of Rueda's open curiosity to geographies, periods, and aspects of many times and places of art.

The exhibition of the Gerardo Rueda's collection treasures, of this Imaginary Museum of the artist, makes possible to redesign what, at the level of his most intimate affinities, shapes the sense of a taste and an aesthetic identification not always alike when referring to the respective works —nothing such as opposed to Rueda's pieces as Millares or Saura's ones—, but moving us towards an interest on the different languages expressed in some of his contemporaries' works. This is the generous act of an artist not shutting himself in the boundaries of his closest fellows, but opening his mind to the aesthetic understanding of those differing from him as regards his aesthetic realization.

Gerardo Rueda's work (Madrid, 1926-1996) is perhaps as original and unic as his education and artistic career. Educated at the French Liceo of Madrid, his cosmopolitan vocation and his interest towards everything happening abroad made him to always shy away from Hispanic clichés and stereotypes. When American Abstract Expressionism burst onto the international art scene, with all his movements and nuances, it not only superseded Paris, and in general Europe, as the centre of the artistic avant-garde of the period, but brought about the creation of the El Paso group. By the time, this artist group gathered the most radical and original proposals that would be soon given a concrete representation with the appearance of Informalism.

In the hard core of this abstract movement all over Spain were Gerardo Rueda and Fernando Zóbel, both artists sharing a studio in Madrid and subsequently in Cuenca. At their initiative, the painting collection to be initially installed in Toledo was started. But in 1962, and on occasion of a travel to the Venice Biennale, they met Manuel H. Mompó and Gustavo Torner, who joined them constituting

what some critics have called “El grupo de Cuenca” (The Cuenca group), and founding in 1966 the Spanish Abstract Art Museum, located at the Casas Colgadas in Cuenca. These three artists contributed to transform the city of Cuenca into the abstract art centre of the country and thus not only to spread the new aesthetic proposals in Spain during the 50’s and 60’s, but also to the aesthetic education of subsequent generations of artists. In Gerardo Rueda’s case, his open and cosmopolitan attitude made him to run away from the dramatics, the gestural violence, the irrational and the convulsed of the artistic proposals of a good part of this group. Hernández Mompó developed a lyric abstraction, Fernández Zóbel outlined in his work an evocation soaked by a certain melancholy, and Gustavo Torner, closer to Rueda’s geometric approaches, presented a very special Surrealistic component.

Gerardo Rueda reintroduces in his works the Italian specialists’ artistic approaches and formal researches, especially Lucio Fontana’s ones. Spatialism was successful in Europe after Informalist crisis, and Rueda made a whole series of works during the years 1961 to 1964, in which Spatialism influence was constant and reflected through the absolute prominence of colour and relief. He subsequently evolved towards an abstract aspect based on more lyric ideas. This tendency, which does not imply a renunciation of his formal research rigor, became equally apparent in the chromatism Rueda applied to his works, with colours also presenting the moderate and serene attitude characterizing his entire work. Although it may seem that his chromatic range is limited, or even frugal, we actually face a subtle and full-of-nuances use of colour.

Among his more public and monumental works, between 1989 and 1992 outstands the realization of the stained-glasses for the Cuenca Cathedral main nave, which were titled “De la Tierra al Paraíso” (From Earth to Paradise); as well as the award he was granted in 1992 for the realization of the doors for the Expo’92 Spanish pavilion, titled Klee in Sevilla I and Klee in Sevilla II. These works were selected by the Spanish diary El País as the most emblematic ones of the last 25 years and are featured at the current exhibition. In 1995, Gerardo Rueda was elected as member of the Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid.