

Exhibition: Antonio Mingote

**IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern
27 January 2009 – 17 May 2009**

Organized by: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

Curator: Leandro Navarro Ungría

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The IVAM presents a retrospective exhibition of the work of Antonio Mingote (Sitges, 1919), cartoonist, writer, journalist and member of the Real Academia Española. The show, curated by Leandro Navarro Ungría, portrays the world of this many-sided artist and offers a survey of his long career, represented here by eighteen paintings and over ninety drawings, magazine covers and illustrations that range over a period from the 1940s to the present day.

The catalogue published to accompany the exhibition contains illustrations of the works exhibited and texts by Consuelo Císcar, Carlos Marzal and Leandro Navarro Ungría, the curator of the show.

The work of Antonio Mingote (Sitges, 1919) depicts a sentimental chronicle that covers over half a century of Spanish history. His cartoons contain a concentrated combination of criticism and reflection, humour and portrayal of society.

Antonio Mingote (Sitges, 1919) began his career as a cartoonist in the magazine *La Codorniz* in 1946 and soon afterwards published his first novel, *Las palmeras de cartón*. In 1953 he started contributing to the newspaper *ABC*, a relationship that still continues. During that period he was also the editor of the humorous magazine *Don José*. He wrote for theatre and television and devised screenplays for films such as *Soltera y madre en la vida*, *Pierna creciente*, *falda menguante*, *Hasta que el matrimonio nos separe* and his political satire *Vota a Gundisalvo*. He later wrote his second novel, *Adelita en su desván*.

In 1967 the Prensa Española publishing group established a prize for work involving humour and graphic journalism, the Mingote Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in Spanish journalism. Mingote's most eloquent and philosophical work, *Hombre solo*, was published in 1970. The numerous honours and awards that he has received include, notably, his appointment as a member of the Real Academia Española in 1987 and the award of the Gold Medal for Merit in the Fine Arts in 2002. He has also been awarded honorary

doctorates by Alcalá de Henares University and Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid.

Mingote's humour adopts many different registers: the surgeon of current affairs; the surrealist, related to the whole golden age of Spanish humour, together with Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Tono, Jardiel and Miguel Mihura; the scourge of moral severity; the critic of social injustice; the diarist of everyday life; the graphic interpreter of Don Quixote. Yet what stands out above all other characteristics, within the absolute unity of his personal world, is the vitality of his attitude. Despite his carefully gauged acidity and irony, Mingote's humour never descends to sarcasm, blackness or nihilism, so that his cartoons have a comforting effect on the reader. Antonio Mingote is a humanist of humour, and, though his humanism is sometimes tragic because it reflects reality, he always gives us something amusing to soothe us.

Mingote's characters possess the gift of physical presence. One feels, on seeing them, that they are fellow human beings and they produce an effect of identification and empathy. Thus Mingote's world becomes a mirror in which the viewer may gaze upon himself and undertake his personal catharsis of stock ideas and prejudices.

Some of Mingote's work has been collected and published in several celebrated volumes, but by its very nature it is dispersed. This exhibition is merely a sample of Mingote's prolific output and versatility, but it provides a perfect way of suggesting the richness of his personality, his persona, based on the two founding features of all his work: artistic talent – pictorial power – and inspiration of a literary nature. Mingote is the most literary of graphic artists and the most graphic of writers.

Although his drawings initially had more convulsive strokes, with stronger lines, more ink, making more of a mark in the frame, Mingote soon acquired the unmistakable style of sharp outlines and clear strokes that he has gone on using ever since. Thus there is a balance in his work between drawing and writing, between what is thought and what is represented. Mingote's cartoons provide a masterly combination of words and pictures.