



Exhibition: ***Masterpieces of Painting from the IVAM Collection: Past, Present and Future***

IVAM Institut Valencia d'Art Modern
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Curator: Francisco Calvo Serraller

Organized by: IVAM Institut Valencia d'Art Modern

Since 2004, the IVAM has organized different exhibitions in order to show the background of its collection from different central themes that structure it. In 2005, the photographic collection was on display, installations and new media in 2006, Pop Art in 2007, abstraction in 2008, sculpture in 2009 and last year was dedicated to works on paper. *Masterpieces of Painting from the IVAM Collections: Past, Present and Future* reinforces this horizon of the exposition in accordance with the objective of documenting, investigating, spreading and promoting the cultural heritage of the IVAM.

The exhibition gathers more than 140 pieces by 114 artists and is distributed among galleries 1, 3 and 4 of the IVAM. It traces a general panorama of the IVAM's pictorial permanent collection that combines the richness of the exhibition's content without blurring its identity. Although the majority of the selected pieces come from the IVAM's permanent collection, loans from private collections are also included that, in accordance with the central themes of the collection, try to indicate possible horizons, as indicated by the show's title. It is an open collection; one that will continue growing in the future. The catalogue made for the exhibition displays the exhibits on show and contains texts by Francisco Calvo Serraller and Consuelo Císcar.

During the twenty-two years that have passed since its inauguration, the IVAM has seen the enrichment of its perspectives, thanks to the increase of its collections. Different from the majority of the art centers that were inaugurated in Spain in the 90s, the IVAM began to gather an initial collection of its own, even before designing the building that would house it. Since its very first events, it was able to establish itself as the pattern that would serve as a model in the future.

Among the characteristics that defined the initial collection, an emphasis was placed on the international members of the avant-garde from the period between wars and it dedicated important attention to Spanish avant-garde art and abstract expressionism, encapsulated in decisive figures by Tàpies, Chillida, Millares and Saura,

together with the most representative artists of the following decades, such as Equipo Crónica and Eduardo Arroyo.

Following a more interpretive organization of the show, the selected pieces are grouped together in three main sections that form the title FIGURE, NORM and ACTION. The section entitled FIGURE, which is shown in Gallery 1, puts great emphasis on the visual narrativity from a good part of 20th century and contemporary painting. “Figurative painting” was very plentiful, especially from the period in between wars. Marked by the “return to order” and, above all, the emergences (not just political) of the 1930s, it also had a very fertile period after the second World War, basically with Pop Art and its various derivations. This trend was consigned to the IVAM collections with a strong, local Spanish and Valencian representation, along with international pieces with these same tendencies, from artists such as V. Adami, Arroyo, Equipo Crónica, Equipo Realidad, R. Linder, A. Katz, J. Genovés, R. Hamilton, G. Aillaud, M. Raysse, G. Richter, J. A. Toledo, A. M. Charris, G. Sicre, M. Valdés, or D. Villalba. Apart from this section, several examples that emerge from this main trend have been searched for, indicating the antecedents, evolution and even parallel directions, such as with the case of J. Sorolla, I. Pinazo, C. Pascual de Lara or Cristino de Vera.

The section entitled NORM, which is shown in Gallery 3, encompasses the pictorial, non-figurative trend of analytic orientation. Some historical examples of geometric abstraction are included in it, which began approximately during 1925-1930, although they are organized together from 1930 on and with the new impulse that was produced after the second World War.

The multiplicity of tendencies that were generated throughout the second half of the twentieth century took an anti-ethical direction: one of increasingly radical retraction that would culminate in Minimal Art, and one of an expansion that went outside of the conventional limits of a painting that was registered by the Op-Art and kinetic art movements, as well as post-pictorial abstraction. From this ample and complex segment, the IVAM collection has examples of international art as well as Spanish artists with special reference to crucial figures like Eusebio Sempere or Gerardo Rueda. Among other artists from this section, works by Sophie Tauber-Arp, G. Vantongerloo, J. Torres-García, Vordemberge Gildewart, Josef Albers, Barnett Newman, Pablo Palazuelo, Peter Halley, F. Kupka, José María Yturralde, Helmut Federle, S. Scully or Tony Bevanare are also being shown.

In the last part of Gallery 3 and into Gallery 4, a more expressive orientation is shown, which manifested itself from almost the very first steps of abstraction and has continued to be operative until now. The culminating moment of this direction was produced after the second World War, with American Abstract Expressionism and other similar versions from Europe during those years, among which we must include the COBRA group, always at a halfway point between the figurative and the abstract. This association emphasizes the importance of the work of informalist painters, among those who had a special relevance are Spanish artists like Antoni Tàpies, Manuel Millares and Antonio Saura, who centered themselves in pure, material dimension and pictorial gesture itself. Precisely because of the natural Spanish roots within this trend, the IVAM collection contains a healthy representation of this action painting, an appropriate term

used to encompass the multiform sense of a work of art that is based on automatism. Among the artists represented, we have the examples of A. Masson, J. Dubuffet, Lucebert, L. Krasner, Esteban Vicente, A. Hofmann, P. Kirkeby, P. Soulages and Albert and Markus Oehlen, among others.

Although schematically, the three channels chosen to structure the drift of contemporary art from the dawn of the twentieth century through the IVAM's pictorial collection are positioned in the critical zone of the production of painting that was questioned, as with so many art forms of our time. In this sense, the IVAM collection reflects the essence of how much has happened to painting in the last century, trying to display the most significant work. The whole collection is in the background, a work in progress whose progression becomes necessarily more problematic and confusing upon delving into the present, which makes it more qualitatively unfathomable than quantitatively.

The subheading in the title of this show, "Past, Present and Future", shows that this is not a closed collection and that its opening has tried to metaphorically discern itself, with contributions that fulfill the modest function of showing that there is a possible horizon for a project that has been in process for a fourth of a century, trying to make sure that this selection coincides with the backbone of the collection.