

Exhibition: ***Anthony Caro. The Barbarians***
IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern
15 March – 23 April 2006

Curator: Consuelo Císcar

Organised by: IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

The Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM) has organised the exhibition *The Barbarians* by the British artist Anthony Caro, which may be visited until 23 April. This sculptural installation comprises seven pieces created between 1999 and 2002, made of terracotta, wood and leather. *Golom*, *Kharjaar*, *Saardag* and *Doroo* are among the most important pieces.

With this work, after years of abstraction, Anthony Caro returns to figuration and narrative sculpture. *The Barbarians* is the culmination of the ideas and reflections generated in fifty years of the artist's life and reveals his curiosity and interest in the art of literature and history.

With this installation, the IVAM pays homage to the work of Anthony Caro, the artist who was awarded the International Julio González Award in its sixth edition.

On the occasion of the exhibition, a catalogue has been published with the reproduction of the works exhibited and texts about Anthony Caro's work by Dave Hickey and the director of the IVAM, Consuelo Císcar.

Anthony Caro (London, 1924) played a crucial role in the development of 20th century sculpture. He made his first sculptures in 1946, while studying

engineering. In 1947 he began his artistic training at the Royal Academy School in London, and between 1951 and 1953 he worked as an assistant to Henry Moore in his studio. In the late fifties he abandoned his figurative period and endowed his sculpture with an independent status of its own, without attempting to imitate reality. This period coincides with his trip to the United States, where he discovered the work of David Smith, the sculptor who first introduced him to welded iron sculpture. After discovering Smith, the British artist gave up traditional metal sculpture and started to construct abstract works with industrial materials. His sculptures began to define a unique, functional physical space. He also incorporated the creative force of the Russian Constructivists and the sculpture of Giacometti, Picasso and Julio González, among others.

Caro usually works in steel, although he also uses a broad range of materials like bronze, silver, lead, ceramics, wood, terracotta and paper, among others. He has always shown curiosity about working with the materials least often used in sculpture. He includes, combines and assembles them, intensely influencing the creative process.

With *The Barbarians*, Anthony Caro returns to figurative sculpture after many years of abstraction. This series represents a group of six savage horsemen accompanied by a solitary figure on an ox-drawn carriage. The origin of the seven pieces occurred one day as Anthony Caro and his wife were walking around London in 1999; during their walk he came across a junk shop with several objects from a gymnasium that greatly attracted his attention: vaulting horses with a nostalgic air. The sculptor looked at them and imagined they were a group of wild riders, barbarians who had come from the past and gathered in front of a shop in the centre of the city. This anecdote was the start of the series, but the concept had arisen long before:

specifically in the nineteen sixties, in Henry Moore's studio, when he was working on figurative forms, and in the eighties, when he became interested in classical antiquity. Furthermore, he is an avid reader of literature and poetry.

Looking at the works displayed in Gallery 3, the lines of the 1904 poem "Waiting for the Barbarians" by Constantine Cavafy, a poet that Caro likes, spring to mind. The main theme of the poem is "the necessity of barbarians" in today's society. The artist plays with the creative possibilities that the destabilising impact of this onslaught could have on our era.

The artist creates the figures in his studio upon the vaulting horses, each modified for the occasion and elaborated by elements of wood and steel and clay. The wood and steel is cut to fit but not modelled or refined. The clay units, which were made by Caro in the south of France with ceramist Hans Spinner, are not created for any specific figure but as a repertoire of parts, of heads, legs, torsos and arms to be mixed and matched in the studio as an apt metaphor for the genetic diversity of nomadic peoples.

Looking at his sculptures, we can see that the artist *connects* things and puts them together. He does not refine them by cutting parts away and paring them down. This was the traditional manner of Caro's great teacher, Henry Moore. The materials of art, according to Caro, are available in the world around us, not hiding in the stone or the clay or in the domain of metaphysical certainty. The parts require inspired assembly, nothing more, and demand to be assembled in a way that grants each of them some semblance of their original physical autonomy.