

# An Hommage to Pierre Matisse

## Works by Miró, Millares, Saura, Rivera and Canogar

27.01 – 13.04.2022

Mayoral presents an exhibition in celebration of Pierre Matisse, one of the most important modern art dealers in the world, who enabled certain Spanish post-war *avant-garde* artists to achieve recognition throughout Europe and in the United States. The exhibition, curated by Elise Lammer, presents 5 artworks by Miró, Millares, Saura, Rivera and Canogar from Pierre Matisse's collection.

In the 1930s, driven by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and Hitler's rise to power in Germany, several European artists, gallery owners, curators and intellectuals emigrated to other European countries and to the United States (mainly to New York), thereby paving the way for the international *avant-gardes*. Amongst them was Pierre Matisse, Henri Matisse's youngest son. The gallery that bore his name, inaugurated in 1931 on the 17th floor of the Fuller Builder, at 41 East 57th Street in New York, hosted more than 310 exhibitions before his death in 1989.

### **Pierre Matisse and Joan Miró. An exemplary relationship that lasted 50 years**

Pierre Matisse and Joan Miró met in 1930 through an old friend of the latter's, the Parisian art dealer Pierre Loëb. At a time when the United States were the envy of the world, Miró, then aged 40 and with his career in full swing, saw the young Matisse as an opportunity

“I must say how moved I am by the courage and enthusiasm with which you are organising this exhibition which, and this is no time to be modest, may have great repercussions, driven by a clairvoyant man of action such as yourself.”

Letter from Joan Miró to Pierre Matisse (16th November 1936)



**Joan Miró**  
*Untitled*  
(1981)  
Oil, gouache,  
Indian ink and  
charcoal on paper  
54.6 × 40 cm

Provenance: Pierre  
Matisse Gallery

to conquer a new territory, as well as an ally for channelling and promoting the new Spanish painting to American critics. Pierre Matisse exhibited Miró's work from 1932 and organised 35 solo exhibitions from 1933 (with a catalogue prefaced by Ernest Hemingway) until Miró's death in 1983.

The exemplary relationship between Pierre Matisse and Joan Miró lasted 50 years. It enabled them both to write their own chapter in the history of art; in fact, as a politically engaged art dealer, he was arrested by the Spanish police in the middle of the war for having crossed the border with money intended to pay for a painting by Miró. Whilst Matisse played an essential role in Miró's institutional success, especially by means of his first major retrospective

at MoMA (1941), Miró, one of the instigators of Spanish informal art in the United States, used his reputation to promote the work of the members of the El Paso group across the pond.



**Rafael Canogar**  
*Zóna erógena*  
*(Erogenous Zone)*  
 (1959)  
 Oil on canvas  
 198.5 × 149 cm  
 Provenance: Pierre  
 Matisse Gallery

“Personally, I think that there is only one way to be an art dealer, and that is to stay friends with your painters.”

Letter from Pierre Matisse to Joan Miró  
 (17th June 1945)

## “Four Spanish Painters”, an exhibition by Pierre Matisse which prefigured those at MoMA and the Guggenheim

In March 1960, on Miró’s advice, Matisse organised a reshewing of the Barcelona exhibition of the El Paso group, exhibiting the works of Millares, Canogar, Rivera and Saura. “Four Spanish Painters” attracted the attention of the New York press and kick-started the careers of several of its members in the United States, before the major collective exhibitions at MoMA (“New Spanish Painting and Sculpture”, 1960) and the Guggenheim (“Before Picasso; After Miró”, 1960), which established the international reputation of the group.

Pierre Matisse included Manolo Millares, Antonio Saura and Manuel Rivera as his gallery artists and he did some solo shows of them. He played a considerable role in promoting the new Spanish painting, which expressed the post-war trauma and anxiety caused by Franco’s dictatorship, amongst the American public.

The galerist was also very close to his artists, as demonstrated by his abundant correspondence with those he represented. Extracts of these letters accompany the documentation selected for the exhibition.

### The curator

**Elise Lammer** (born in Lausanne, lives and works in Basel) was trained as a fine artist in Barcelona and holds an MFA in Curating from Goldsmiths College, London.

She is the host and curator of #ArtTaaalkssss the Thursday evening lecture series at Institut Kunst in Basel where she is also a Lecturer. As the curator of La Becque, an artists residency located on the shore of Lake Geneva, she has been developing a garden and performance programme in homage to Derek Jarman at La Becque | Artist Residency in La Tour-de-Peilz since 2018. She is the director of Alpina

Huus, since 2015, a research platform exploring performance and domesticity, which is currently in residence at Arsenic, Contemporary Performing Arts Centre in Lausanne.

As an artist, curator and writer, Elise Lammer has participated in exhibitions in institutions and galleries internationally, including mumok, Vienna; Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris; Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome; MAMCO, Geneva; The Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin; The Goethe Institut, Beijing, Hong Kong; and MCBA, Lausanne; among others. She is a regular contributor to Mousse Magazine.

### The gallery

Gallery specialised in Modern and Post-war art founded in Barcelona in 1989. In November 2019, Mayoral opened a second gallery in Paris. It articulates an exhibition programme focused on Informalism and Post-war art, both Catalan and Spanish, with artists such as Tàpies, Chillida, Millares, Saura, Guerrero, Zóbel, Canogar, Rivera and Francés. At the same time, the gallery also exhibits the work of key twentieth-century avant-garde artists such as Miró and Picasso.

It develops projects that are rigorously curated and grow out of an exhaustive process of research based on original documentation. The gallery relies upon the support

of the artists’ families, foundations and other institutions whose mission resides in preserving and publicising the legacy of the artists they represent. Likewise, it enjoys the complicity of many collectors and museums, both public and private, when it comes to accomplishing its mission.

The gallery participates in art fairs such as TEFAF Maastricht, TEFAF New York, Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Basel Unlimited, Art Paris, Art Cologne and ARCOMadrid.