

Tàpies Today

18 January – 13 April 2019

Mayoral is pleased to present **Tàpies Today**, a monographic exhibition devoted to Antoni Tàpies which follows the artist's creative trajectory and argues for the validity and relevance of his work today. Arnau Puig, a friend of the artist and an expert in his work since the creation of the group **Dau al Set**, is the curator of the show.

The exhibition includes a fine selection of eleven medium and large format paintings, created between the end of the 1950s and the start of the twenty-first century, which permit the viewer to appreciate the evolution of Tàpies's informal art. These are materic spaces, conscious and gestural amalgams that become objects of their own volition. In the words of the curator, the pictures are "pure emotional expression; a clamour of sorts," and not only do they respond to the individual subjectivity of the artist, they also communicate a critical attitude vis-à-vis a specific socio-political and geographical context. Social impact and political commitment are expressed in an execution founded on emotional projection and individual historical perception. As Arnau Puig points out: "Tàpies has created each work in pursuit, and as an investigation, of a peace he needed with

regard to a conflictive environment; certainly for him. Or for those—once again—who might identify with it: *Nuat* (*Knotted*) (1997)."

In visual terms the artist utilizes an experimental symbolic language—already present in his first purely informal works, such as *Matèria negra sobre sac* (*Black Matter on Sack*) (1960)—combining this, as time goes by, with the assemblage of objects and different materials, as can be seen in *Diaris amuntegats* (*Piled-up Newspapers*) (1969), *Ocre amb sis collages* (*Ochre with Six Collages*) (1973) and *Cadira i fustes* (*Chair and Pieces of Wood*) (2002).

Not only is Tàpies's pertinence manifested in his revolutionary visual language—it is also present in his humanist vision; in the vindication of emotion and poetry; in the introduction of Eastern philosophies with a magisterial use of empty space as a further element in the canvas, and in his civic and social commitment. An oeuvre, in short, that goes on addressing viewers in the twenty-first century and continues to be "authentic" in the sense he himself defined in the article "Art-Idea," published in 1955: "Dilapidated forms cannot serve new ideas. When the forms are not capable of



acting aggressively upon the society that greets them, of disturbing it, of inciting it to reflection, of unmasking it for its own sluggishness, when the forms are not of a rupturing nature, there is no authentic art. Before a true work of art the spectator should feel the need for an examination of conscience, for a revision of his conceptual range. The artist must make him touch with his hand the very limits of his universe and open new perspectives to him. It is a matter of a truly humanistic enterprise". ("Art-Idea" was originally published in *Destino*, n. 931)



Nuat
(*Knotted*) (1997)
Mixed media and
assemblage on wood
130.5 × 162 cm

Fletxa i cordill
(*Arrow and Cord*) (1974)
Mixed media and
assemblage on canvas
116 × 73 cm

A catalogue has been published for the exhibition which, along with the curator's essay, includes two new readings of works in the show, written by curators Laura Copelin and Elise Lammer. The publication also includes a series of interviews with the four directors of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies from its inception until now, undertaken by the cultural consultant Lluçia Homs. Manuel Borja-Villel, Nuria Enguita, Laurence Rassel and Carles Guerra are in agreement about the need for Tàpies to become an artist of the twenty-first century, an artist who poses questions about the present time, and they also agree on the indisputable capacity of his work to generate a new reading.

Also reproduced in the catalogue are two pictures that were featured in the 1958 Venice Biennale:



Rectangles (Rectangles) (1958) and *Oval gris morat (Purple-Gray Oval)* (1958), the latter to be shown in the TEFAF Maastricht fair this spring, coinciding with *Tàpies Today* at the Mayoral art gallery.

Díptic negre amb creus
(*Black Diptych with Crosses*) (1988)
Mixed media on wood
200 × 350 cm
(78.7 × 137.8 in)

Antoni Tàpies

Antoni Tàpies (1923 – 2012) is a key artist in the development of modern art in Catalonia and Spain, and one of the most important representatives of Informalism at the international level. A lover of literature and music, he was interested in Eastern art and philosophy. With the aim of promoting the study of modern and contemporary art, in 1984 he created the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, which opened its doors in Barcelona in 1990.

Widely recognized and studied, his work has been the object of numerous individual and collective exhibitions, and is present today in the collections of the world's most prestigious museums.

Mayoral

Mayoral is an art gallery specialized in modern and postwar art founded in Barcelona in 1989. The gallery's exhibition programme focuses on the founders of the *Dau al Set* artistic movement, such as Antoni Tàpies, Joan Brossa and Modest Cuixart, as well as on other great Spanish post-war artists: Eduardo Chillida, Manolo Millares, Antonio Saura, José Guerrero, Fernando Zóbel, Rafael Canogar and Luis Feito. At the same time, the gallery also exhibits the work of some of the great avant-garde masters of the twentieth century: Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Alexander Calder and Marc Chagall.

The Curator

Arnau Puig (Barcelona, 1926) is a Doctor of Philosophy and Professor of Philosophical Aesthetics and Composition at Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB). He was the founder—along with Tàpies and others—of some of the first non-conformist publications (*Algo* and *Dau al Set*) of the Spain which emerged after the Civil War. He was given a grant by the French government to study at the Sorbonne. He has been director of the Spanish School of History and Archaeology, pertaining to the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), in Rome. He is a critic and curator of art exhibitions, and has published numerous books on sensibility, thought, art and the vital experience that harnesses and generates all of these. He argues that perceptual aesthetic sensibility is the preamble to all knowledge and to all vital practice, including scientific.

The gallery carries out projects that are rigorously curated and which are the result of a thorough research process. Moreover, it works in collaboration with the families of the artists, as well as with foundations and other institutions whose aim is to preserve and promote the different artists' legacy. Likewise, Mayoral enjoys the support and confidence of museums and collectors, both private and institutional.

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