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# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

No. 85

For Release:

Wednesday, July 20, 1960

Press Preview:

Tuesday, July 19, 1960

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

New Spanish Painting and Sculpture, an exhibition of fifty-four works by sixteen artists who have come into prominence during the past decade, will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, from July 20 through September 25. Following the New York showing the exhibition will be sent to museums throughout the country, the first survey of avant-garde Spanish art to tour the United States.

As Frank O'Hara, director of the exhibition, points out in the catalog,\* the selection is intended to indicate the diversity of styles and preoccupations by which some of the leading figures are developing their individual idioms. The artists included are the painters Rafael Canogar, Modest Cuixart, Francisco Ferreras, Luis Feito, Manolo Millares, Lucio (Muñoz), Manuel Rivera, Antoni Saura, Antonio Suárez, Antoni Tàpies, Joan Josep Tharrats, and Manuel Viola; and sculptors Eduardo Chillida, Martin Chirino, Oteiza (Jorge de Oteiza Embil) and Pablo Serrano. Each is represented by two to four works installed by Wilder Green, Assistant Director of the Department of Architecture and Design.

Fifteen private collectors and galleries here and abroad as well as the artists themselves have lent works to the exhibition. Many have never been shown in this country. A painting by Cuixart and two by Tàpies are from the Museum Collection.

The long period of Spain's isolation, from the end of its Civil War (1936-1939) until after the close of World War II, has been followed by a period of intense artistic activity. In contrast with the generation of Picasso, Miró and Gonzalez, which had lived and worked largely outside Spain, the "new" Spaniards, though exposed to current art movements while studying abroad, returned to their homeland. There, much of their time is devoted to the propagation of contemporary esthetic ideas.

This concern is reflected in the emergence of numerous publications to which most of the artists have contributed. The first of these, Dau al Set, was founded in Barcelona in 1948 when there was virtually no contact with movements in other art capitals. Tharrats, Tàpies and Cuixart were among those involved in the publication which was of tremendous importance to the future of contemporary Spanish art. Equally important was the founding by Saura, Millares, Canogar and Feito of the El Paso group, which has presented exhibitions in Madrid since 1957. Prior to this Barcelona was the major center of the avant-garde activities.

Although the new Spaniards have received an enormous stimulus from international

\* New Spanish Painting and Sculpture by Frank O'Hara. 64 pages, 61 plates. Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed to booksellers throughout the country by Doubleday & Co., Inc. \$2.75.

art movements they have not discarded the achievements of the Spanish past. Summarizing these influences, Mr. O'Hara says in the wall label:

Particularly in the last five years, Spanish artists have explored modern technical and formal innovations and in many instances developed highly personal expressive qualities. At the same time, the muted palette common to many, the preference for dramatic presentation of the image, the sometimes brutal yet detached handling of the material, remind us that the achievements of the great Catalan painters, of Velasquez and Goya, of Gaudí in his sculptural architecture and plastic treatment of interiors are not absent from the consciousness of the present generation.

All of the artists have exhibited in various international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale, the São Paulo Bienal and the Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture. Although several have won awards and critical acclaim at these events, they have not yet received widespread recognition in Spain. Only Feito, Millares, Tàpies and Tharrats have had one-man shows in the United States.

New Spanish Painting and Sculpture, organized by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, has been scheduled for over two years. It is the first exhibition to be circulated by the Museum with the aid of a grant from the CBS Foundation for the continuation and strengthening of the national program of traveling shows. Among the cities in which it will be shown are Washington, D. C.; Atlanta, Georgia; Coral Gables, Florida; San Antonio, Texas; Columbus, Ohio; Cincinnati, Ohio; Manchester, New Hampshire and New Orleans, Louisiana.

#### Notes on the artists

Rafael Canogar (b. 1934), the youngest artist in the exhibition, is represented by four powerful action paintings including the recent 10 foot high Saint Christopher. He lives in Madrid where he had his first one-man show in 1954.

Eduardo Chillida (b. 1924), a native of San Sebastian, began sculpting at the age of 23 after studying architecture at the University of Madrid. His next four years were spent in Paris. Among the awards Chillida has received is the International Prize for Foreign Sculpture at the 1958 Venice Biennale. He is represented by four sculptures in which, as Mr. O'Hara points out, he has carried on the great tradition of forged iron craftsmanship finding in the Spanish past "the inspiration for his own singular and highly metaphysical expression."

Martin Chirino (b. 1925), who also works in forged iron, is represented by four works ranging from 8 inches to two feet high. After studying in Madrid, London and Paris, Chirino returned to his home in Las Palmas and began to experiment with wood, stone, cement and iron in making abstract sculptures. For the past five years he has lived in Madrid where he is a member of El Paso. His first one-man show was held there in 1958.

Modest Cuixart (b. 1925) gave up the study of medicine in 1946 to devote himself to painting with which he had been involved for five years. While in France in 1951 he designed sets for the Guignol Theater in Lyon. Last year he was awarded the Grand Prize at the São Paulo Bienal. Mr. O'Hara relates the circular metallic forms in Cuixart's recent canvases to the thick golden halos of fifteenth-century Catalan saints.

Francisco Ferreras (b. 1927), after travelling extensively in Belgium, The Netherlands, England and France, painted his first non-figurative works in 1955. He has executed mosaics, frescoes and stained-glass windows in buildings throughout Spain and, in 1956, won a competition for thirteen frescoes for the chapel of Castillo de Las Navas del Marques in Avila. Three collages of oil and paper on wood are shown. Ferreras lives in Madrid.

Luis Feito (b. 1929), who is represented by three paintings, had his first one-man

show in Madrid in 1954, the year he received his diploma from the Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Having received scholarships from the French and Spanish governments he traveled to Paris where he had a one-man show in 1955. A participant in several international exhibitions, Feito was recently awarded a David E. Bright Foundation prize at the XXX Biennale in Venice. A one-man show of his work was held in New York earlier this year.

Manolo Millares (b. 1926) began experimenting with abstraction in 1949. He works with torn canvas, stitching over voids and creating encrustations of painted burlap or bandage-like swathes. Mr. O'Hara says "Far from being formalistic exercises based on collage, his works have more and more taken on the aspect of ceremonial vestiges, particularly of the bull ring - elegance of the torero's garments, the torn padding of the horses under the bull's attack." Earlier this year he had his first one-man show in this country. He has lived in Madrid since 1955.

Lucio (Muñoz) (b. 1929) whose first one-man show was held in Madrid five years ago, is represented by three paintings, the carved surfaces of which are reminiscent of cave walls. Lucio studied in Madrid and later spent a year in Paris on a Spanish government scholarship. Examples of his work are included in the current XXX Biennale in Venice.

Oteiza (Jorge de Oteiza Embil) (b. 1908), like Cuixart, abandoned the study of medicine to take up painting. He has lived, worked and lectured throughout South America. In 1957 he won the International Sculpture Prize at the São Paulo Bienal. His iron and aluminum sculptures, the largest of which is approximately two feet high, show an affinity to the geometrical researches of the Constructivists and the Bauhaus.

Manuel Rivera (b. 1927), a painter who works in wire and wire mesh, began his non-figurative work in 1950 after studying in Granada and Seville. He has executed a number of murals in various Spanish cities and last year had his first one-man show in Madrid where he has lived since 1951. He is a member of the El Paso group, with which he exhibited in 1957. Rivera himself has pointed out the analogy between his paintings and the spider's web.

Antoni Saura (b. 1930) taught himself to paint in 1947 after a long illness. His early surrealist work was exhibited in a one-man show in Madrid in 1951-52. While living in Paris he began experimenting with abstract expressionism. Mr. O'Hara compares the terror of his Imaginary Portrait of Goya to Goya's Dog Buried in the Sand which hangs in the Prado in Madrid.

Pablo Serrano (b. 1910), who is represented by two large welded iron sculptures, began sculpting in 1928. Two years later he moved to Uruguay where, under the influence of Torres-García, he experimented with abstraction. After his return to Spain he traveled extensively in Europe and in 1958 went to Paris. He now lives in Madrid where he works independently having broken away from the El Paso group to which he formerly belonged.

Antonio Suárez (b. 1923), whose three paintings show a seeming affinity with the French "tachistes" spent three years in Paris, where he had his first one-man show abroad in 1952. After his return to Spain he collaborated with architects in executing murals, mosaics and stained glass windows for public and private buildings. He participated in the first El Paso exhibition

Antoni Tàpies (b. 1923), the first of the Spanish avant-garde to receive international recognition, gave up the study of law at 23 to become a painter. After spending some time in France on a French government fellowship and in Belgium and The Netherlands he returned to Barcelona where he now lives. In 1953 he came to New York for his first one-man show in this country. Among the awards he has received is the First Prize in Painting at the 1958-59 International in Pittsburgh. Mr. O'Hara points out that Tàpies has moved steadily toward bas relief. In his recent paintings there is no illusion of depth except for the actual depth of gougings and incisions.

Joan Josep Tharrats (b. 1918), whom Mr. O'Hara says is "the most intellectual... head-long Expressionist, astral, destructive of order," painted his first abstract picture in 1946 and four years later had his first one-man show in Barcelona. He studied in France from 1931-33 and since then has returned to Paris from time to time. In 1955 a one-man show of his collages was held in New York.

Manuel Viola (b. 1919), who now lives in Madrid, spent ten years in Paris where he exhibited in many group shows, using the name "Manuel" from 1945-49. From that time until 1953, when he had his first one-man show in Madrid, he did not exhibit. Since 1958 he has participated in exhibitions of the El Paso group. He is represented by two recent works, one of which is entitled Homage to Rothko.

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## Notes on the "New Spanish Painting and Sculpture" Exhibition

Fifteen private collectors and galleries here and abroad and the artists themselves have lent works to New Spanish Painting and Sculpture which was selected by Frank O'Hara, Assistant Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions. Fifty-six works by 16 artists are included. Wilder Greene, Assistant Director of the Department of Architecture and Design, installed the show. The catalog written by Mr. O'Hara (192 pages, 193 plates) and published by the Museum of Modern Art, is being distributed throughout the world by Doubleday, Inc. The exhibition is being circulated throughout the country by the Museum of Modern Art's Department of Circulating Exhibitions under the direction of Porter McCray. Its tour is made possible by a gift from the CBS Foundation.

As Mr. O'Hara points out, the long period of Spain's isolation, from the end of its Civil War (1936-1939) until after the close of World War II, has been followed by a period of intense artistic activity. In contrast with the generation of Picasso, Miró and Gonzalez, which lived and worked largely outside Spain, the "new" Spaniards, though exposed to current art movements while studying abroad, returned to their homeland. There, much of their time is devoted to the propagation of contemporary esthetic ideas. Although the new Spaniards have received an enormous stimulus from international art movements they have not discarded the achievements of the Spanish past. Summarizing these influences, Mr. O'Hara says:

Particularly in the last five years, Spanish artists have explored modern technical and formal innovations and in many instances developed highly personal expressive qualities. At the same time, the muted palette common to many, the preference for dramatic presentation of the image, the sometimes brutal yet detached handling of the material, remind us that the achievements of the great Catalan painters, of Velasquez and Goya, of Gaudí in his sculptural architecture and plastic treatment of interiors are not absent from the consciousness of the present generation.

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Luis Feito (b. 1929), who is represented by three paintings, had his first one-man show in Madrid in 1954, the year he received his diploma from the Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Having received scholarships from the French and Spanish governments he traveled to Paris where he had a one-man show in 1955. A participant in several international exhibitions, Feito was recently awarded a David E. Bright Foundation prize at the XXX Biennale in Venice. A one-man show of his work was held in New York earlier this year.

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September 20, 1960

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*Hand-out of Spanish Party*

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New Spanish Painting and Sculpture, an exhibition of works by artists who have come into international prominence during the last decade, is the first survey of avant-garde Spanish art to tour the United States. During the next 16 months these pictures will travel over 2,000 miles through seven states and the District of Columbia.

This traveling show, and others yet to be assembled, was made possible by a grant of \$150,000 from the CBS Foundation, the organization through which the Columbia Broadcasting System makes its charitable contributions. This generous gift to the Museum of Modern Art's 30th Anniversary Fund will enable the Museum to strengthen and expand its pioneer program of circulating exhibitions, which, like many other of its existing and potential educational services, has been restricted by lack of funds.

The Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions, under the direction of Porter McCray, has achieved a unique record by sending out more than 500 exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, architecture, design and photography from this country and abroad for more than 4,000 showings. Its recent history, however, is a dramatic illustration of the Museum's current financial plight. For more than 20 years the Museum contributed a subsidy of about one-third the total cost of circulating exhibitions in order to close the gap between what subscribers could afford to pay and the actual costs. In recent years this gap has widened and the Museum's ability to subsidize such an extensive program has diminished. As a result, the number of shows available had to be sharply cut back despite a growing number of requests.

Coupled with a grant of \$50,000 from a private donor, the CBS Foundation gift means that the Museum can now reorient this circulating program to meet current and future needs particularly in our country's colleges and universities which have assumed increasing responsibility for presenting modern art to the general public in their localities as well as to their own students.

### Itinerary of New Spanish Painting and Sculpture

Washington, D. C.	Corcoran Gallery of Art	October 31 - November 28, 1960
Columbus, Ohio	Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts	January 3 - 31, 1961
St. Louis, Missouri	Washington University	February 16 - March 16, 1961
Coral Gables, Florida	Joe & Emily Lowe Art Gallery	April 1 - 29, 1961
San Antonio, Texas	University of Miami	May 15 - June 12, 1961
Chicago, Illinois	Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute	July 19 - August 27, 1961
New Orleans, Louisiana	Art Institute of Chicago	September 18 - October 16, 1961
Cincinnati, Ohio	Isaac Delgado Museum of Art	November 1 - 29, 1961
Manchester, New Hampshire	Contemporary Arts Center	December 15, 1961 -
	Currier Gallery of Art	January 12, 1962

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