PRESS DOSSIER

Juan Genovés, *Documento nº...*, 1975. Museo Reina Sofía. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz. © Juan Genovés, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026

COLLECTION. CONTEMPORARY ART: 1975 – PRESENT

MUSEO NACIONAL CENTRO DE ARTE REINA SOFIA

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO DE CULTURA

Press Dossier

COLLECTION. CONTEMPORARY ART: 1975 – PRESENT

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The new presentation of the Museo Reina Sofía Collections stretches across the entire fourth floor of the Sabatini Building to recount **the art history of Spain over the past fifty years by way of 403 works by 224 artists**. This new narrative, which seeks to underscore the contribution of Spanish contemporary art, takes us back to the turbulent 1970s, a period through which we can understand the present as a collective construction: democratic space forged from the early days of Spain's Transition to democracy to the present day.

COLLECTION. CONTEMPORARY ART: 1975 – PRESENT stems from extensive collective work that began in 2023, led by Manuel Segade's management team and the curatorial team from the Museo's departments, and overseen by the deputy artistic director, Amanda de la Garza, who mobilised and engaged departments throughout the institution, from the Collections, Restoration and Registrar Departments to the Library and Documentation Centre, Editorial Activities, Security, Architecture, Communications and Financial Administration and Management, in addition to support from the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation and Friends of the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation. This process of transformation will continue in 2027 with a second presentation of the Collections on the third floor of the same building, this time comprehending the period between the 1950s and 1970s, and is set to culminate in 2028 with the unveiling of a second floor devoted to avant-garde art. Therefore, within three years the full re-arrangement of the Museo's spaces will reach its conclusion, streamlining the display of the Collections in full across the three upper floors of the Sabatini Building and situating temporary exhibitions on the lower floors of the Nouvel Building.

This new exhibition layout on Floor 4 of the Sabatini Building will unfold across **twenty-one chapters**, encompassing the display of well-known pieces from the Reina's Collections, as well as **recent acquisitions and highly contemporary works by young artists**, with the stress also placed on how Spain's artistic landscape was reflected in different social and institutional transformations in the final years of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. The exhibition of these works is structured around **three exhibition routes** which return, on numerous occasions, to the 1970s and with geographical spaces that are not a closed context but rather an intersection and a place of circulation for cultural manifestations. The three routes put forward an affective history — an emotional reading — of these fifty years, a revision of sculpture and the material culture of contemporary art, and a narrative of gradual institutionalisation, recounting, for the first time, the history of the Museo as part of its holdings. The Reina's intention is to disseminate these narratives as possibilities and frameworks for future presentations, thereby making the Collections **continually open to revision.**

Of the total number of artists present, **173 (77%) are from Spain** and fifty-one (23%) from other countries, with sixteen of these (31%) artists of Latin American origin. Within this total, twenty-six are collectives or works made in collaboration, while 129 (65%) are men and sixty-nine (35%) women, the highest percentage ever displayed in the Museo, with women artists representing less than 15% in the Collections. Another key detail is that **258 works (64%) are unexhibited**; that is, over half of the works displayed on this floor have not previously been on view in past presentations of the Museo's Permanent Collection. Of the total number of works displayed on the fourth floor, seventy have been purchased in the last two years (2024–26), and **over half of these, thirty-six, are by women artists (51%)**.

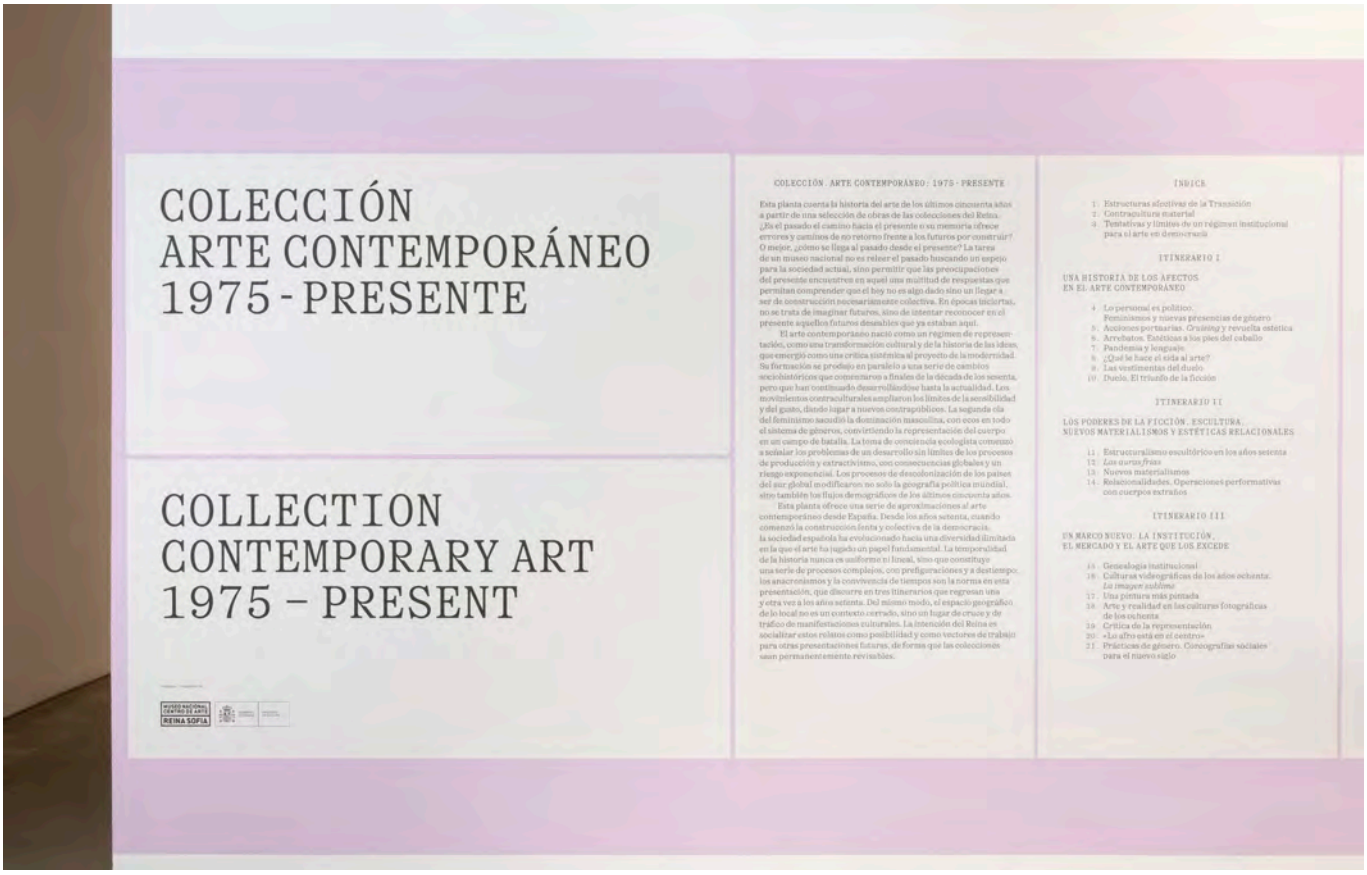
A Museum Project that Places Visitors Front and Centre

The new presentation marks a change in the manner of displaying the Museo's holdings to the public through a more **accessible, dynamic and educational** arrangement that facilitates visits. Considerable effort has gone into making it easy to understand and gain context via texts that accompany each of the works, as well as those in the galleries and on the fourth floor in general.

The installation arrangement of the works has been designed by **Xabier Salaberría**, alongside architect **Patxi Eguiluz**, while the graphic design was created by **Hermanos Berenguer,** with adaptations by **ferranElOtro**. Their approach, based on the reconfiguration of architectural spaces, dispenses with customary exhibition-language neutrality, opting instead for an installation design that combines volumes and breaks up spaces, creating new exhibition routes where works leave the walls to burst forth in the centre of the room, allowing visitors to embrace the fragmentation of narratives by following a rigorous order which gives rise to multiplicity and culminates in a diverse present.

With the aim of placing **visitors front and centre of the museum experience**, the new itinerary of artworks will also include portable seating throughout the floor, available as required to ensure an agreeable and accessible visit for the public.

The Reina has also concentrated its efforts into transforming its exhibition production dynamics to ensure the new presentation is based on a criterion of sustainability: the posters and other supporting written material are no longer created using vinyl and are produced on more environmentally friendly paper supports. Furthermore, this year LED lights have been installed across the entire floor, premiering new lighting which adheres to the present standards of energy sustainability.



View of the entrance to COLLECTION. CONTEMPORARY ART: 1975 – PRESENT

Three Exhibition Routes. Three Ways of Contemplating Fifty Years of Art

With a linear and not always chronological layout, this fourth floor, with over 3,000 square meters of exhibition space, offers a series of approaches to contemporary art from Spain by virtue of three exhibition routes which render an account of the proliferation of discourses, the diversity of technical media and, above all, the wealth of materials and meanings in contemporary art practices in Spain and internationally. It also includes, for the first time, a genealogy of the institution as part of this narrative.

COLLECTION. CONTEMPORARY ART: 1975 – PRESENT gets under way with three spaces that serve as a point of departure, starting from Spain's Transition to democracy and moving, more specifically, through affects, material culture and institutionalism as an introduction to the exhibition routes that follow. The exhibition begins with **Juan Genovés**' work *Documento nº ...* (Document ... No., 1975), which stresses the relevance of basic rights and the need to protect democratic progress already made, and a vignette by cartoon humourist **Chumy Chúmez**, the cover of *Hermano Lobo* published two days prior to the death of Francisco Franco. The first chapter, *Structures of Affect of the Spanish Transition*, shows the disillusionment and emotional frailty of Spanish society in a period marked by radical protests, for instance the attack on **Picasso**'s prints at Galería Theo in 1971, the inherent violence in **Miró**'s burning of a canvas and a short film by **Iván Zulueta**, recently soundtracked by **Jota de Planetas**, and its urban images of violent social protests.

The next space, *Material Counterculture*, grants visibility to myriad subjectivities that had remained concealed during Francoism and are represented via emblematic works such as Asunción Gloriosa (Glorious Assumption, 1981–82) by **Ocaña**, acquired by the Museo in 2024, and *Escena: personajes a la salida de un concierto de rock* (Scene: Figures Leaving a Rock Concert, 1979) by Guillermo Pérez Villalta, a representative of the Movida movement and postmodernity. Also in this space are works by **Nazario**, belonging to the Lafuente Archive, the painted boards of **Ceesepe**, for the La Vaquería bar on Calle Libertad, pockmarked by gunfire, record covers and music videos from the time, and the jewellery of designer **Chus Burés** for the films of **Pedro Almodóvar**, among numerous other pieces.

Attempts at and Limits of an Institutional Regime for Art in Democracy concludes this area of the Transition with attempts, not always successful, to internationalise and institutionalise Spanish culture and art. Within this context are the pioneering and extreme performances of **Jordi Benito**, **Warhol**'s visit to Spain in 1983 for his show at Galería Vijande and **Richard Serra**'s 1981 maquette and project — never realised — to make a sculpture in the centre of Madrid.

Following on from this narrative-opening space we move into the first exhibition route, entitled *A History of Affect in Contemporary Art*, which sets out the generative power of affects in artistic creation and their role, not only as private experiences but as political and social forces that give form to art and serve to reconstruct the ties of community in times marked by crisis. Affective systems were vitally important to the first conceptual generation, particularly for women artists involved in the second wave of feminism internationally, who placed women's bodies at the centre of the public arena. New forms of social presence in the 1970s entailed affective yet unprecedented connections, primarily in society's seemingly marginalised spaces

New sexual freedoms, semantic systems of subcultural communities, psychoactive drugs and addiction, and the proliferation of a culture of shared, global images would profoundly impact artistic languages in this era. In the mid-1980s, the AIDS epidemic, running in parallel with

widespread heroin use in Spain, shook the system of affects in the country. The world order in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA in 2001 and their reverberations in Madrid with the 11-M attacks in 2004 gave rise to a new reality in which fiction appeared to have triumphed over the real. Yet the mourning that arose as a collective affect was a powerful tool of social cohesion.

The context of this route explores feminisms, eco-feminisms and a new presence of gender with recently acquired works by **Judy Chicago** and **Barbara Hammer**, and the trailblazing Spanish artist **Esther Ferrer**. The cruising, gender codes and abandoned pier scenes of **David Wojnarowicz**, the heroin-laced raptures and aesthetics of film-maker Iván Zulueta and photographer **Alberto García-Alix** configure the narrative of this exhibition arrangement, with pandemics and mourning at its heart, for instance with works by **Luis Fernando Zapata**, **Miquel Barceló**, **Beatriz González**, **Juan Muñoz** and featuring key figures in the cultural, political and social representation of AIDS, such as **Pepe Espaliú**, **Pepe Miralles** and **Cabello/Carceller**.

The second route, entitled *The Powers of Fiction: Sculpture, New Materialisms, and Relational Aesthetics*, references the time in which sculpture and other processes of object production fractured the limits between representation and reality. Contemporary art grants primacy to bodies and their relations and prompts a discovery of how our dealings with objects have changed.

In this arrangement the exhibition space is a reality designed explicitly for the encounter between bodies and things, a sculptural gallery where works co-exist physically in the same space as the visitor, and where the barriers between fiction and reality have been broken down. Most of the works displayed in this space are unexhibited and are yet to be viewed as part of the Museo Reina Sofía Collections.

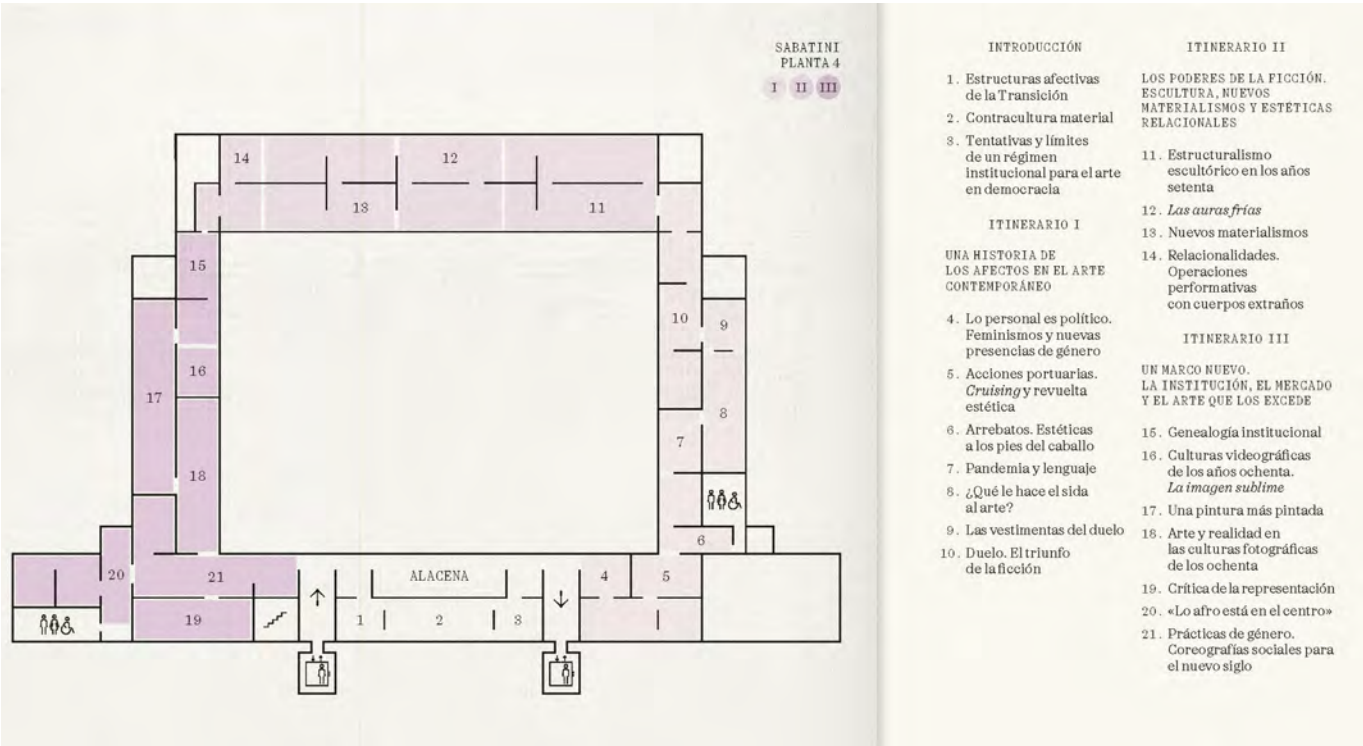
Following 1970s structuralism, with **Juan Navarro Baldeweg** as its major representative, the impact of the new Spanish sculpture of the 1980s would be felt internationally, particularly via female figures who situated Spain at the forefront globally, for instance **Susana Solano**, **Cristina Iglesias**, **Carmen Calvo** and **Ángeles Marco**, all present on this floor. In recent years, a new generation of young sculptors, such as Teresa Solar and June Crespo, have risen to international prominence as the most relevant contribution of today's Spanish art and are also incorporated into this space.

This area enables us to gain a sense of the transformations of objects from around the world and the relationship they bear to people; to experience the undeniable performative nature of sculpture; to discern new materialities, still emerging, and even speculative forms; and to imagine new institutionalisms via relational aesthetics, an ensemble of artistic practices which require community participation to be realised.

Finally, route three, A New Framework: *The Institution, the Market, and the Art that Transcends Both*, encompasses, for the first time, the genealogy of the Museo and the Spanish art system in an exercise of self-representation and recognition of key figures such as **Carmen Giménez**, **María Corral**, **Elvira González** and **Juana de Aizpuru**, who contributed to their creation and momentum. The arrangement also shines a light on the development of early videographic culture in Spain and the importance of the exhibition *La imagen sublime* (The Sublime Image, 1987) in the process. It retrieves and analyses the explosion of new figuration in Spanish painting in the 1980s through the works of **Guillermo Pérez Villalta**, **Carlos Alcolea**, **Patricia Gadea**, **Chema Cobo**, **Eva Lootz** and **Menchu Lamas**, among many other artists. And the role of art and reality in photographic cultures from this decade via pieces by **Ouka Leele**, **Cristina García Rodero**, **Xurxo Lobato** and **Manuel Vilariño**, to mention but

a few. Furthermore, there are different manifestations of contemporary art explored from political and theoretical positions inside the framework of the critique of representation, for instance those of **Joan Fontcuberta** and **Dora García**. The works here also reflect the development of the social body in contemporary art, opening spaces of presence to Afro identity with the practices of **Pocho Guimaraes**, **Agnes Essonti** and **Rubén H. Bermúdez**, and gender practices from more recent decades with works by **Pilar Albarracín** and **Laia Abril**, among others.

Consequently, this exhibition route observes how, as the 2000s progressed, the figure of the multidisciplinary artist became consolidated to transcend conventional limits. Museums, as democratic institutions, responded to efforts by new forms of social presence to gain visibility in a contemporary art intersected by the identity conflicts that shaped the twentieth century, and which have now become a core aspect of social co-existence in the twenty-first century.



Information map of the layout by Routes and Spaces of COLLECTION. CONTEMPORARY ART: 1975 - PRESENT

Rafael Canogar, *Escena urbana*, 1970. Museo Reina Sofía. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz. © Rafael Canogar, VEGAP, Madrid, 2025

Exhibition Routes

1. Structures of Affect of the Spanish Transition

View of Room 1 «Estructuras afectivas de la Transición». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

The presentation of the Museo Reina Sofía Collections begins chronologically, in the period known as the Transition to democracy. Coinciding with the end of the Franco regime, in the 1970s, this time period witnessed numerous artistic manifestations of resistance, dissent and refusal, all of which intensified in the wake of the dictator's death in 1975. To this backdrop, the aim is not to re-read the past to mirror today's society. Rather, it is to make it possible for our current concerns to find responses that allow for an understanding of our present as something we build together every day.

The exhibition route begins with the work *Documento nº ...* (Document ... No., 1975) by artist **Juan Genovés** (Valencia, 1930 – Madrid, 2020), an artistic reference point from the Transition era and within Spanish political art who represents the iconography of protest against repression. The work belongs to the hyper-realist series of figures set to a white background which turns the image into a visual document of condemnation. The scene depicts a looming summary trial, interrogation or even execution. At the disturbing height of Franco's dictatorship, it reflects repressive procedures, institutional violence and human rights violations — the figure in the work, alone and handcuffed, eyes closed, embodies the defenceless citizen against the machinery of the State. Genovés sought to make his pictures work as visual evidence, almost as journalistic photographs, that would document repression, turning his paintings into both a testimony and memory of an era marked by the struggle for freedom.

Alongside it is Portada de *Hermano Lobo año 4: n.185* (The Cover of Hermano Lobo Year 4: No. 185), by **Chumy Chúmez** (San Sebastián, 1927 – Madrid, 2003). The work is the first cover of the magazine Hermano Lobo published after the death of the dictator, dated 22 November 1975. Chumy Chúmez, showcasing what he himself called "malicious humour", once again shows a man in a suit, his eyes covered by the hands of a robed figure, who shouts out *"The Future!"*.

Society's disillusionment and emotional frailty converged with the formal radicalness of artists. Therefore, in this first space we can contemplate *Escena urbana* (Urban Scene, 1970) by **Rafael Canogar** (Toledo, 1935) with the inherent violence in *Tela quemada 4* (Burnt Canvas 4, 1973) by **Joan Miró** (Barcelona, 1893 – Palma de Mallorca, 1983) after his return to Spain; the evident censorship in the struck-through texts of Seguimiento de una noticia (Following a Piece of News, 1977) by **Concha Jerez** (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1941); and the brutality of the defacement of **Pablo Picasso** (Málaga, 1881 – Mougins, France, 1973) prints during an attack of protest by the Guerrilleros de Cristo Rey (Warriors of Christ the King) at Galería Theo in Madrid at the opening of an exhibition displaying *Suite Vollard* (1930–1937) in 1971. In the attack, six men burst into the gallery, throwing acid over the walls and artworks, striking the pieces with mallets and slicing them with knives. Sixteen of the twenty-seven works were destroyed; it was the first in a series of protest acts against Picasso's works in the same year. The gallery kept these destroyed prints as historic proof of this viciousness and as an irrefutable witness of inadmissible acts. They are displayed here by the Museo in this presentation with the same prints from another series in perfect condition. The pieces bear witness to changing times and constitute an ethical exercise in historical reparation at a time when remembering the violence that leads to intolerance feels necessary.

Furthermore, this space includes the short film Hotel by **Iván Zulueta** (San Sebastián, 1943 – 2009), soundtracked by **Jota of Los Planetas,** where the tension of public space travels from the collective to the private by way of images that document the repression of a gathering in public space or a suicide attempt.

2. Material Counterculture

View of Room 2 «Contracultura material». In the background: Ocaña, *Asunción Gloriosa*, 1981-1982. Museo Reina Sofía. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

From comics and illustrations to street performances, the countercultures that were burgeoning in the 1970s also shed light on a multitude of subjectivities that had remained concealed during Francoism. The popular, the street and dance began to flourish again as living forces in a series of processes known as the Movida movement, soon adopted by the fledgling democracy as a symbol.

Present in this space are music and painting, video, photography, fashion and jewellery design and the design of furniture from an art system still in its infancy. Exhibitions happened in this context beyond the institutional framework, in bars, urban settings from the private sphere and environments where insolence and youth could prosper as a new shared aesthetic capable of giving rise to myriad new ways of life.

Ocaña (José Pérez Ocaña) (Cantillana, Seville, 1947–1983), with his altar *Asunción Gloriosa* (Glorious Assumption, 1981–82), acquired for the first time in the Collections, holds a pre-eminent place in this space as a key figure of the performative, jubilant and queer use of art. Part of Spain's underground culture, Ocaña depicted the activity of political movements and homosexual activism in Barcelona in the late 1970s. *Asunción Gloriosa* belongs to a group of altar-installations he erected from his own position as a marginal subject. The works put forward a heterodox way of appropriating popular rituals from Andalusian Catholicism, transforming them not paradoxically, but as a process of resignification. Ocaña's queer activism gains, with its virgins, a subversive quality against the traditional messages associated with the regulation of class, gender and sexuality.

Conspicuous in late-1970s art is also night-life and bar culture, characteristic of the urban environments of Barcelona and Madrid, and particularly in the Movida, with works such as *Tableros del bar La Vaquería de la calle Libertad* (Boards from the La Vaquería Bar in Calle Libertad, 1976), three doors from a bar in Chueca that **Ceesepe** (Carlos Sánchez Perez) (Madrid, 1958–2018) and **Borja Satrústegui** (San Sebastián, 1943) had painted and on which we can observe the bullet holes from an attack in the establishment frequented by Madrid's countercultural bohemia. Also in the room are comics by **Nazario** (Seville, 1944), part of the Lafuente Archive, the screenplays to Átame (Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!), and Matador by **Pedro Almodóvar** (Calzada de Calatrava, 1949), and the jewellery designed by **Chus Burés** (Barcelona, 1956) for some of Almodóvar's films and donated to the Museo.

The work *Escena: personajes a la salida de un concierto de rock* (Scene: Figures Leaving a Rock Concert, 1979) by **Guillermo Pérez Villalta** (Tarifa, Cádiz, 1948), one of the most unique voices in Spanish post-modernity and the Movida, captures a historic still of people piling out of a Kaka de Luxe and Los Zombies gig at Ateneo Libertario. Portrayed on the canvas are eleven emblematic figures, including: Javier Furia and Herminio Molero, from Radio Futura; Alaska, dressed in leopard-skin; Tesa Arranz, from Los Zombies, holding a cigarette; Pérez Villalta, contemplating the scene, and Carlos García Berlanga, from Kaka de Luxe. A further work by Pérez Villalta, with **Rafael Perez-Minguez**, displayed in the room is Biombo acuario-tetera (Teapot-Aquarium Partition, 1972) and their Sfinx (Sphinx, 1986) bench, which reproduces the schematic form of a mythological figure.

On view in the space devoted to Madrid's Movida movement are album covers by **Montxo Algora** (Biscay, 1955), part of the Lafuente Archive holdings, unexhibited paintings by **Rafael Pérez-Mínguez** (Madrid, 1949–1999) and by Costus (Enrique Naya, Juan Carrero) (Madrid, 1981 – Badalona, Barcelona, 1989), among others.

3. Attempts at and Limits of an Institutional Regime for Art in Democracy

View of Room 3. «Tentativas y límites de un régimen institucional para el arte en democracia ». At the front: Richard Serra, *Maqueta para proyecto en la plaza de Callao en Madrid*, 1981. Colección particular. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz. © Richard Serra, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026

Opposite the post-Francoist desire to come out of isolation and institutionalise and internationalise Spanish culture and contemporary art, galleries became important spaces of international exchange —with the **Andy Warhol** (Pittsburgh, 1928 — New York, 1987) exhibition *Pistolas, Cuchillos, Cruces* (Guns, Knives and Crosses, 1983) at Galería Vijande a landmark — yet with aspirations of building, at the same time, a still non-existent market. **Fernando Vijande**, widely regarded as the Movida's art gallerist, was the promotor of an artistic revolution that swept Madrid and Spain along towards contemporaneity, due in part to the visit of an emblematic figure of late-twentieth-century artistic post-modernity in Andy Warhol. That encounter resulted in *Warhol's work Knives* (1982), loaned to the Reina for over two decades, and on view in this third space.

Live arts also gained ground and broke the limits of what was considered art, allowing extreme actions such as those shown in the work of **Manel Armengol** (Badalona, 1949) entitled *Tortura / The Living Theatre* (1976), in which he photographed the mythical performance of this American group at the La Paloma venue in Barcelona in 1976, decrying the torture and abuse of the Franco regime. A further example is a young, self-taught artist, **Javier Campano** (Madrid, 1950), whose first forays into photography captured a series of happenings and performances by US artists **Charlotte Moorman** (Little Rock, 1933 – New York, 1991) and **Allan Kaprow** (Atlantic City, 1927 – Encinitas, 2006) and would become a landmark in the country's art scene.

Emerging from a long dictatorship, Spain's artistic landscape in the 1970s would accelerate and

recover lost time with no social or institutional framework to sustain it. As a result, ambitious solo projects surfaced, for instance the attempt in 1981 to install a work by American sculptor **Richard Serra** (San Francisco, 1938 — New York, 2024) in Plaza de Callao in Madrid. The project had the backing of the Madrid Mayor during the Movida, Enrique Tierno Galván, whose death and the subsequent change of mayor meant it was never executed, however. A maquette and plans for the project are exhibited here as a remnant of that temporality knocked out of place by a dictatorship whose shadow still loomed large.

Richard Serra, *Maqueta para proyecto en la plaza de Callao en Madrid*, 1981. Colección particular. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz. © Richard Serra, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026

Pepe Espaliú, *Sin título (Tres jaulas)*,1992. Museo Reina Sofía. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz. © Pepe Espaliú, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026

Route I.
A History of Affect in Contemporary Art

4. The Personal Is Political. Feminisms and New Gender Presences

View of Room 4 «Lo personal es político. Feminismos y nuevas presencias de género». Judy Chicago, *Women and Smoke* [Mujeres y humo], 1971-1972. Museo Reina Sofía. © Judy Chicago, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz.

The first rooms in this arrangement, devoted to relaying a possible history of affects in contemporary art, are narratively threaded together by two main focal points: on one side, the importance of feminism in the evolution of contemporary artistic practices and its contribution to the critique of the representation of women, and on the other, the decisive role of art as a tool to shine light on new forms of gender presence and the struggle for LGBTQI+ rights.

The second wave of feminism that surged in the late 1960s employed "The Personal Is Political" as one of its main slogans. Furthermore, art that upheld critical positions against the patriarchy saw its aesthetic tools broadened through 1970s critical theory, which drove forward a renewal of artistic languages still with currency today.

The woman and her body, turned into a battlefield, went from being an object to an unrivalled political subject in artistic practices, particularly in the field of performance and body art. To illustrate this, the route opens with the video *Women and Smoke, California* by a pioneering artist in feminist art, **Judy Chicago** (Chicago, 1939), which documents a series of performances executed between 1971 and 1972 to denounce the absence and erasure of women from the Western cultural canon, in this instance in the origins of the Land Art movement. A work, acquired by the Museo in the 2025 edition of ARCO, which could be associated with today's term "ecofeminism".

In the room's main space we encounter other international artists, such as **Dorothy Iannone** (Boston, 1933 –

Berlin, 2022) with *I Was Thinking Of You* (1975) and **Sanja Ivekovic** (Zagreb, 1949), with *Trokut* (Triangle) (1979), two works which transform, in parallel, an intimate, self-erotic experience such as masturbation into a political gesture. Resulting from major donations to the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation by Latin American collector Jorge Pérez, in 2022 and 2026, this room also displays Transformations I (1976 / 1977) by **Gretta Sarfaty** (Athens, 1947) and Untitled. Glass on Body Imprints (1972/2021), by **Ana Mendieta** (Havana, 1948 – New York, 1985).

One of the pioneers of performance in Spain, **Esther Ferrer** (San Sebastián, 1937), occupies a prominent place in the room with *Íntimo y personal* (Intimate and Personal, 1977/1992), an action which involves the measuring and quantifying of her body, primarily, and the bodies of other people, with the idea of questioning stereotypes on the female body. Presented here is the recording of the action at two different points in time, 1977 and 1992, allowing the viewer to observe the passing of time in the artist's body and to add another layer of critical reading on female ageing. Also in this space are other artists from Spain, for instance **Eulàlia Grau** (Terrassa, 1946), a key voice in critical feminism and social protest, represented with her series of silk-screen prints entitled *Discriminación de la mujer* (Women's Discrimination, 1977).

Feminism's political and aesthetic progress echoed around the whole gender system. Thus, at the opposite end of the room we find different artistic endeavours which represent the rising visibility of gay, lesbian and non-binary positions and the questioning of fixed identities. These include the film *I Was/I Am* (1973) by US film-maker **Barbara Hammer** (Los Angeles, 1939 – New York, 2019), a pioneer of feminism and queer experimental cinema. The film represents the symbolic death of a past self associated with the normative ideal of femininity and its rebirth after she fully embraces her homosexuality, reappearing as a motorcycle, leather-clad woman, an aesthetic that challenges gender roles. This is also demonstrated in the accompanying photograph, *On the Road, Big Sur, California* (1975/2017), both donated to the Museo Reina Sofía by the Calparsoro Foundation in 2026.

Another protagonist in this space is **Hudinilson Jr.** (São Paulo, 1957 –2013), a pioneering artist in the use of Xerox Art in Brazil, which facilitated the mass circulation of artworks. This technique enabled the democratisation of discourses against heteronormativity and the social stigma of the AIDS crisis that his generation lived through. Also displayed are numerous works donated to the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation by Susana and Ricardo Steinbruch in 2025, among them his *References Notebooks*, artist's books put together as never-ending collages denoting a bona fide activist record of sexual dissidence.

Worthy of note, moreover, are the paintings, hitherto undisplayed, of artist Juan Luis Javier Marí (València, 1952), known under the pseudonym **JULUJAMA** and regarded as one of the precursors to queer art in Spain in his display of an uninhibited camp aesthetic on the male body from an erotic and ironic gaze, and the images of **Roberto González Fernández** (Monforte de Lemos, 1948), which document protest marches in San Francisco in defence of sexual diversity while also focusing on a more playful, joyful side, shared by many in this room, shortly before the flare-up of the AIDS crisis.

5. Port Activities. *Cruising* and Aesthetic Revolt

David Wojnarowicz, Serie *Arthur Rimbaud in New York* [Arthur Rimbaud en Nueva York Series], 1978-1979 / Copia póstuma, 2004. Museo Reina Sofía. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz. © David Wojnarowicz Estate, courtesy PPOW Gallery, New York and The Estate of David Wojnarowicz

The new social presence representing a non-normative sexuality brought with it affective ties that were also unprecedented, above all in seemingly marginal spaces in the contemporary post-industrial city. These "other" spaces, with their own rules and codes, created ideal conditions for community socialisation.

A good example of this was cruising, a customary practice on the derelict piers of the Hudson River in New York, the scene of part of the work of **David Wojnarowicz** (Red Bank, 1954 – New York, 1992), an artist whose practice exemplified like few others the entwinement between the personal and the political. The piers of the Hudson, and other public spaces of New York at the height of urban, social and political transformation, are the stages for *Arthur Rimbaud in New York* (1978–1979/2004), one of Wojnarowicz's most emblematic series, in which some of the artist's friends wear a mask of the accursed poet, drawing a parallel with the life of Rimbaud and his own life, cut short in 1992 by the AIDS epidemic, which decimated the gay community at the time.

In that marginal area of New York, where a countercultural community gestated, serving as an alternative space of experimentation and dissent, key names from the art history of that period were involved, for instance **Gordon Matta-Clark** (New York, 1943–1978), **Vito Acconci** (New York, 1940–2017), **Robert Barry** (New York, 1936), **David Askevold** (Montana, 1940 – Halifax, 2008) and **Lee Jaffe** (New York, 1950), among other artists, all of whom are represented in the photographic series

Projects: Pier 18 (1971/1992), a project curated by Willoughby Sharp, who invited twenty-seven male artists to create different works on one of the city's abandoned piers. In relation to this artistic period in New York City, the Museo conserves major holdings from the exhibition *Manhattan, Mixed Use*, curated, in 2010, by Lynne Cooke and Douglas Crimp.

The new semantic systems that built the different subcultural communities are exemplified by the work *Gay Semiotics* (1977/2014), by **Hal Fischer** (Kansas City, 1950), donated to the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation by Mercedes Vilardell in 2025. The work is a series which, via a formal and objective aesthetic, yet loaded with irony, sets forth a visual analysis of the codes of interaction between homosexual men in the 1970s.

Along with New York and San Francisco, Madrid appears in a similar light as a stage of sexual dissidence in the drawings from the *Chueca* (1982) series of **Carlos Forns Bada** (Madrid, 1956), a visual artist who in this run-down Madrid neighbourhood in the 1980s found a hotbed for different leisure spaces, where social and affective ties were experienced with greater freedom.

6. Ruptures. A Junk Aesthetics

View of Room 6 «Arrebatos. Estéticas a los pies del caballo». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

The used needles that appear in David Wojnarowicz's series relate to the next space in the exhibition arrangement, devoted to the heroin epidemic in Spain and its portrayal in the cultural manifestations of the time. The relationship between the figure of the junkie and artistic creation was key in Spain, for the so-called "lost generation" of the 1980s was hugely productive for the aesthetic regime of the Transition.

The zenith is represented by *Arrebato* (Rapture, 1979), a seminal work by film-maker and designer **Iván Zulueta** (San Sebastián, 1943–2009) and a central piece in this space. In the film, cinematic creation and heroin use appear inextricably linked as vampiric experiences which ultimately devour its protagonists. Considered a self-portrait and generational mirror of Madrid's underground culture, the film shows experimentation with drugs and sex as a space of freedom at the dawn of the democracy.

Drug addiction was also a recurrent theme, via the street and first-person experience, in the comic books of the time, as evinced by **Ceesepe**'s original *Vicios modernos* (Modern Vices, 1978–1979), from the Lafuente Archive, and in photography, with the work of **Alberto García-Alix** (León, 1956), who put forward a poetic ethnography of the daily life of the Movida. His photograph *En ausencia de Willy* (Willy's Absence, 1988) is a portrait of the absence of the artist's brother, who died of an overdose, represented by his shirt on the ground and accompanied by a pencil drawing of him.

7. Pandemic and Language

View of Room 7 «Pandemia y lenguaje». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

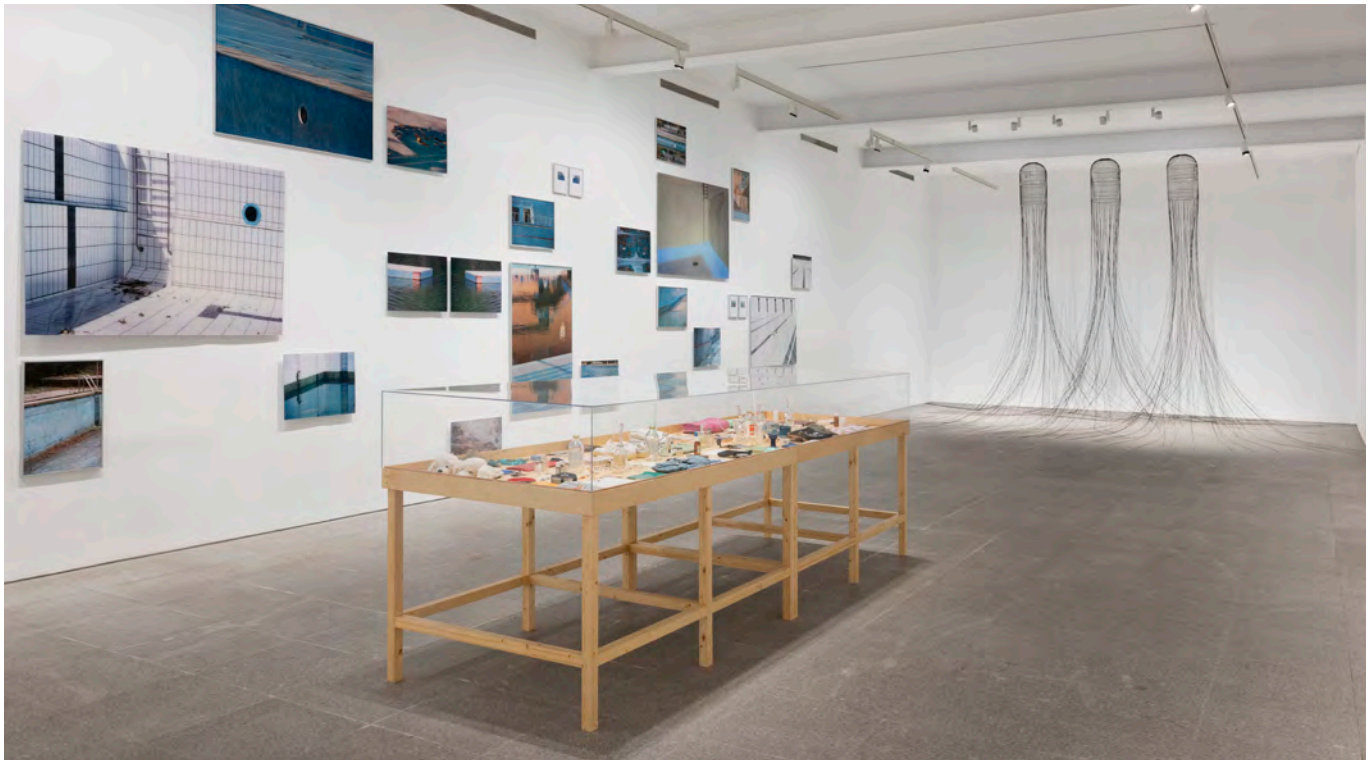
In parallel to the heroin epidemic, and in close relation to Spain, the AIDS pandemic shook the system of affects in the mid-1980s. The devastation caused by the HIV virus, with its huge global impact by the mid-1990s, was addressed primarily in art demonstrations from the sphere of critical conceptualism. Contemporary artistic practices which placed at their centre the ghostly relationship between representation and reality emerged as being sufficiently equipped to produce the aesthetics of AIDS from the period. A good example is found in the work of Colombian artist **Luis Fernando Zapata** (Girardot, 1951 – Bogotá, 1994), represented in this room via *Objeto Ritual* (Ritual Object, 1989) and *Sarcófago nº. 4* (Sarcophagus No. 4, 1992–1994), the latter forming part of the series Sarcófagos, his last great project, conceived after contracting HIV at the beginning of the 1990s in Paris. Far from withdrawing because of the virus, Zapata embarked upon one of his most creative periods, where, as

a performative and spiritual act, he enters, silently, a wet papier-mâché mould, leaving the physical imprint of his body to create a kind of transitory chrysalis between life and disappearance.

Many of the works in this room do not directly allude to the intimacy and affects of the AIDS epidemic, but are invested by each spectator, who is situated in the moral terrain of commitment. A good example of this verification of omission, this highlighting of absence, is a work by **Peter Hujar** (Trenton, 1934 – New York, 1987), *Palermo Catacombs No. 2* (1963), a series of photographs in which different mummies appear represented as genuine portraits. The work denotes a reflection on loss, the body and memory, which prefigured the portraits he would make years later of some of his sick friends, the victims, like himself, of HIV.

Additionally, in the room are works by two other Latin American artists who died prematurely from AIDS-related complications, Paraguayan artist **Feliciano Centurión** (San Ignacio Guazú, Paraguay, 1962 – Buenos Aires, 1996), and **José Leonilson** (Fortaleza, 1957 - São Paulo, 1993), the latter a Brazilian artist who was not represented in the Museo Reina Sofía Collections until a recent donation to the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation by Mercedes Vilardell.

8. What Does AIDS Do to Art?



View of Room 8 «¿Qué le hace el sida al arte?». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

The following space in this presentation contemplates more extensively works which offer a clearer reflection of the AIDS pandemic, an apt demonstration of how contemporary art expanded its affective capacities.

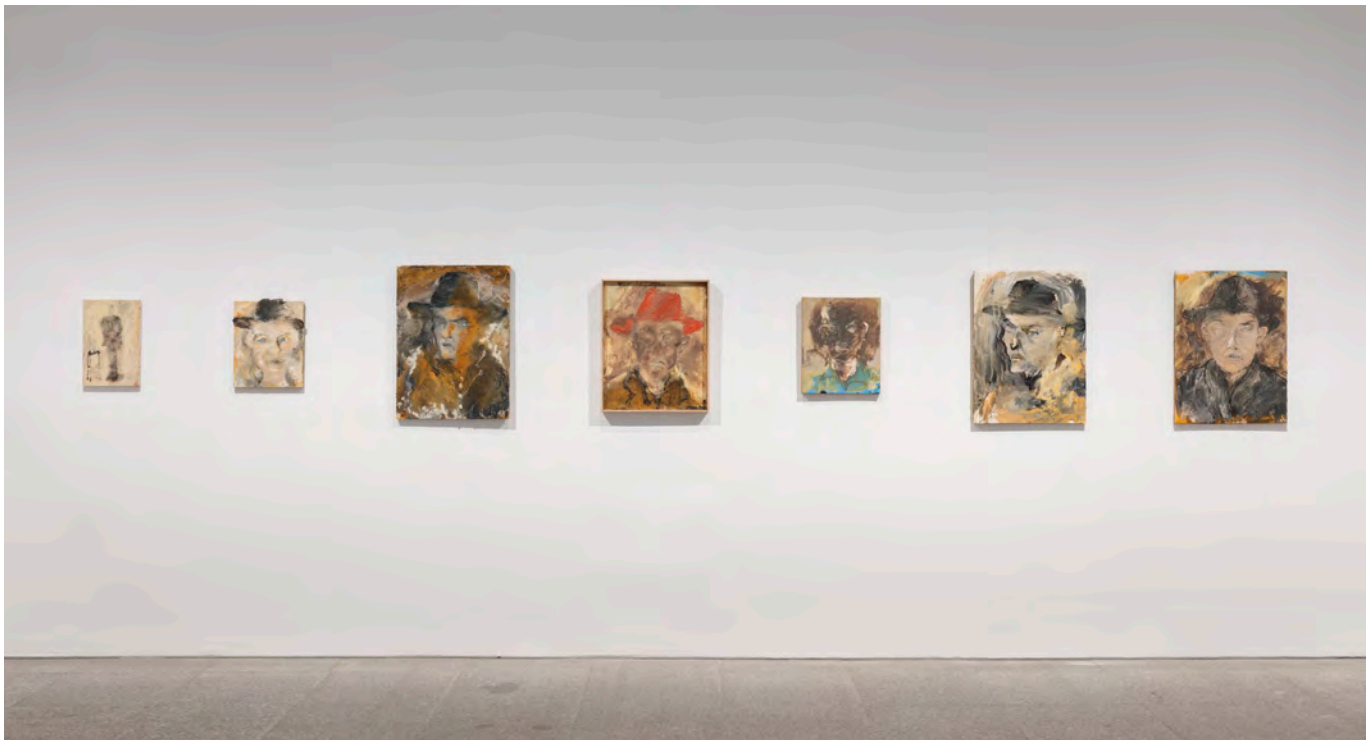
Faced with an invisible pandemic, in which the illness was and still is a stigma, many artists opted for marked exhibitionism as a political tactic. One of the main exponents of the aesthetics of mourning was the artist **Pepe Espaliú** (Córdoba, 1955–1993), whose work, characterised by formal sophistication and with a strong autobiographical quality, sees the body become a political territory of conflict. Such is the case with the large installation at the heart of the room, *Sin título (Tres jaulas)* (Untitled. [Three Cages], 1992), which evokes, on one side, the isolation that produces the stigma caused by the illness and, on the other, the urgency of shared care, a need for the other intimated by the filaments that expand in the space, and which appear to come through the encounter with visitors.

In this room we also encounter his series *Diez últimos dibujos* (Last Ten Drawings, 1993), conceived on the brink of his own death after his HIV-positive diagnosis in 1990, where he continues a practice closely articulated around subjectivity and his condition as a "terminally ill" artist. Fully aware of the fragility of his body, Espaliú repeatedly refers to the motif of his crutches, which once again hold an ambivalent meaning: at once a metaphor for the illness and a support structure to advance, sustain and create.

Another of the key works in this room is the installation by **Pepe Miralles** (Xàbia, 1959), an artist and researcher whose practice combines critical theory and activism around sexual dissidence, HIV and the social construction of identity in the public sphere. *Ajuares* (Funerary Offerings, 1997) culminates in the project *Etnografía de una enfermedad social* (Ethnography of a Social Illness), which was started in 1994 in the form of an affective archive to gather personal and daily objects linked to the illness of his friend, Juan Guillermo, who died during the AIDS pandemic: his clothes, his palliative care treatments against HIV... revealing the human side of the epidemic to turn the exhibition space into a place of memory and shared mourning.

Central to one of the walls in this room is the photographic series acquired in 2024, *Sin título (Utopía)* (Untitled. [Utopia], 1998–2003) by the collective **Cabello/Carceller** (Madrid, 1992 – present), whose work represents one of the biggest Spanish contributions to gender critique from the visual arts. From political melancholy, the series depicts a series of swimming pools in Madrid, many of them emptied at the end of the summer season. The work was created upon returning from an artist's residency in San Francisco, a hub in the struggle for the rights of the gay community, which in the early 2000s appeared to have forgotten that the AIDS crisis was still in progress. The piece can be understood, therefore, as the political flip side of the Pop and hedonistic pool paintings of David Hockney, where silence and cold stage a battle for the end of a pandemic still under way.

9. The Costumes of Grief



Miquel Barceló, serie de retratos de Hervé Guibert, 1990. Depósito temporal del artista, 2025. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz.
© Miquel Barceló, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026

The next point along the exhibition route shapes a kind of transitional space between the representation of the AIDS pandemic in contemporary artistic practices and the collectivisation of mourning, which we witness in the coming rooms. The space pivots around two artists deeply connected within the biographical and artistic sphere: French critic, writer and photographer **Hervé Guibert** (Paris, 1955–1991) and painter **Miquel Barceló** (Felanitx, Mallorca, 1957).

In 1990 Guibert published *Al amigo que no me salvó la vida* (To the Friend Who Did Not Save My Life), a stark exercise of autofiction where he divulges being HIV-positive, understood at that time as a death sentence. A part of the final years of his life, Miquel Barceló became, under the name Yannis, a central character in two of his last novels *L'Homme au chapeau rouge* (The Man in the Red Hat) and *Le paradis* (Paradise), published posthumously, the year after his death.

In being part of this game of mirrors, Miquel Barceló made the portrait series of Guibert displayed in this room, and which the writer described as: "Now Yannis was painting me dying, a skull under a red hat with blue eyes ablaze [...]. He painted three or four pictures a day and then threw them on the floor, dousing them in an acid that corroded them and disfigured me, [...] and he said: 'I have seized your soul'".

This portrait series, loaned to the Museo by the artist and exhibited for the first time, is dated and mounted in the room chronologically, as a strong testimony of the painter's intellectual relationship with key figures from the cultural milieu in France, and, more importantly, of the condition of death and its representation as one of the limits of painting. As Barceló wrote in his recent autobiography: "To paint is to erase".

10. Mourning: The Triumph of Fiction

Beatriz González, *A posteriori*, 2022. Depósito indefinido de la Fundación Museo Reina Sofía, 2025. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz.
© Beatriz González, 2016

The rooms that see out this first itinerary focus on tracing a story of affects from contemporary art that have at their core the idea of mourning, approached from different viewpoints while being closely entwined.

On one side, collective mourning in the wake of the terrorist attack that ushered in the twenty-first century — 9/11 in New York — represented here through 9/11, a video by **Tony Oursler** (New York, 1949), and its re-release with 11-M in 2004 and the Al Qaeda attacks in Madrid. The new world order configured by the attacks was accompanied by a new culture of the shared, global image that was characteristic of late capitalism: a new reality in which fiction had seemingly triumphed over the real. The new visual paradigm would reverberate profoundly in artistic languages, witnessing, in parallel, a second form of mourning, a mourning of representation, before another absence, the constant void of reference, which gave rise to an inhospitable art during this period. Some of the key works in this space speak of the confrontation of this mourning, and of the movement from the individual and the intimate to the collective. Firstly, worthy of mention is *The Waste Land* (1986), an installation by **Juan Muñoz** (Madrid, 1953 – Eivissa, 2001), one of the pinnacles of the artist's output, with the title referring to the renowned poem by T. S. Eliot. The work, embedded within the context of theories around the simulation of thinkers such as Jean Baudrillard, features one of the artist's optical floors with the figure of a ventriloquist in the background, a "waste land" populated by silent signs which turn the installation into a funeral monument to the decline of representation.

A piece which greets visitors as they enter the space is *Región de validez* (Region of Validity, 2007–2017) by artist **Carlos Rodríguez-Méndez** (As Neves, Pontevedra, 1968), acquired for the

Museo at the last edition of ARCO by Spain's Ministry of Culture. For the work, the artist asked his mother, a couturier by profession, to make, each month, a pair of trousers and long-sleeved shirt with measurements, taken in situ, of his father, to be sent to him. The packages he received over ten years, all unopened, reference art's capacity to speak of subjects such as absence, the crisis of representation, temporality and memory, projecting the artist into the future with the culmination of his father's funeral ritual.

Inside an intersectional space in the arrangement we encounter an illuminated room inviting rest, inside of which is the sound installation *Long Gone* (2006), by **Susan Philipsz** (Glasgow, 1965), which puts forward an exploration of the sculptural and psychological properties of sound, where the non-professional nature of her voice, silence, the sound of her breathing to catch her breath and the absence of musical accompaniment enfold the spectator in a closeness and intimacy rarely found in an exhibition space.

Serving as an epilogue to the space is the installation *A posteriori* (2022) by the recently deceased Colombian artist **Beatriz González** (Bucaramanga, 1938 – Bogotá, 2026), one of the most influential figures in the Latin American art scene. The piece was her submission for the commemorative monument of the Peace Agreement in 2016 between FARC-EP guerrillas and the Colombian State, a project conceived by the artist Doris Salcedo with the name *Fragmentos. Espacio de Arte y Memoria* (Fragments. Art and Memory Space), Bogotá. González employs the continual repetition of images of men carrying dead bodies with which she previously created the work *Auras anónimas* (Anonymous Auras, 2007–2009), her emblematic intervention in Bogotá's Cementerio Central, transformed here in wallpaper upon which she intervenes across the whole exhibition space, submerging the viewer in an atmosphere of mourning, in a provisional memorial for the victims of violence in Colombia.

Juan Muñoz, The Wasteland [Tierra Baldía] 1986. Colección Juan Muñoz Estate. © Juan Muñoz Estate. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

View of Room 11«Estructuralismo escultórico en los años setenta». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz Madrid, 2026

Route II.
The Powers of Fiction: Sculpture, New Materialisms, and Relational Aesthetics

11. Sculptural Structuralism in the 1970s

View of Room 11 «Estructuralismo escultórico en los años setenta». At the front: Juan Navarro Baldeweg, *La mesa*, 1974-2005. Museo Reina Sofía. © Juan Navarro Baldeweg, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026. In the background: Anthony Caro, *Table Piece CCXXXII. The Dance* [Pieza de mesa CCXXXII. La danza], 1975. Museo Reina Sofía. © The State of Anthony Caro/ Bradford Sculptures Ltd, 2015. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

At the end of the 1970s, sculpture in Spain shifted its gaze and recovered the language of Minimalism. Artists no longer saw the artwork as an isolated object and started to relate it directly to the space where it was situated and to the person observing it, almost akin to architectural pieces or theatre stages. Sculpture became established as a tool to interpret the environment and small-scale pieces started to be employed and combined to create new forms, facilitating an understanding of the structure of things. Therefore, within 1970s sculptural structuralism we can contemplate in this space works such as *La mesa* (The Table, 1974–2005) by **Juan Navarro Baldeweg** (Santander, 1939), a sculpture series comprising thirty-one works conceived over a thirty-year period, arranged on a singular structure measuring 130 x 220 x 950 cm, which shapes a true retrospective of the formal vocabulary of his sculptures and situated architectural pieces. The solving of compositional, technical and spatial problems was devised specifically to develop the concept of the gravitational field, central to his output, via balances and counterweights.

Found in these spaces focused on sculptural structuralism is the work *No te pases, con escalera de emergencia* (Take it Easy, with Emergency Ladder, 1989), by **Susana Solano** (Barcelona, 1946) donated by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía's Association of Friends as early as 1992. Alongside **Cristina Iglesias** (San Sebastián, 1956), also represented in this room with two works, Susana Solano is one of the core artists in the second half of the twentieth century in Spain, and vital to the modernisation of contemporary sculpture in the second half of the 1980s. The work displayed is an artisan piece based around industrial materials and structures like sheet metal and an iron grate, which further pronounce this strange intimacy of the threshold condition of her sculpture: upon enclosing an impassable interior, her works are monuments to an inner world with a strong affective weight.

Further, in this chapter we find the pioneering work of **Sergi Aguilar** (Barcelona, 1946) with his *Tronc-Espai-Terra-Eina* (Trunk-Space-Earth-Tool, 1974-1975), where he uses small branching trunks that the inhabitants of Menorca used to make tools combining the abstract and the organic. Aguilar is a pioneer in renewing the sculpture of the time, and with a far-reaching international trajectory that started from the exhibition New Images from Spain at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, held in 1980, which gathered the most forward-thinking artistic practices from Spain's artistic landscape, and also featured the participation of **Carmen Calvo** (Valencia, 1950).

This exhibition arrangement also includes the work *Table Piece CCXXXII. The Dance* (1975), by **Anthony Caro** (New Malden, UK, 1924–2013), one of the twentieth century's pre-eminent sculptors. In an exercise of complete abstraction he seeks to flow beyond sculpture on its base, carrying out a process of pedestal reformulation.

12. Las auras frías (Cold Auras)

View of Room 12 «Las auras frías». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

In the late 1980s, philosopher and critic José Luis Brea challenged the hegemony of painting to retrieve artistic languages that had fallen into obscurity. By way of key works such as *Nuevas estrategias alegóricas* (New Allegorical Strategies) and *Las auras frías* (Cold Auras), from 1991, Brea identified a crisis in culture, and spotted an opportunity: a new, self-aware art also capable of generating new forms of expression. The neo-baroque Brea coined was a work of mourning in dealing with AIDS, while his apparent coldness denoted an ethical exercise of great emotional resonance

that contemplated the return of politics to art, the denial of the market's power and a bond with the collective. A pioneer in the use of technology and multimedia practices, Brea's thinking drove an art that not only showed but also reflected on its own capacity to represent the world: a new generation of more committed artists, custodians of conceptual art with a degree of existentialism.

Also in this space is *Éxtasis*, estatus, estatua (Ecstasy, Status, Statue, 1994), by **Juan Luis Moraza** (Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1960), an installation which is made up of 2,496 shoe heels made of resin (48 x 52 rows) in different sizes and forms, with which Moraza establishes a complex metaphor based on the heel as a symbol of the banal construction of femininity and also as an expression of sexual power, along with the phallic allusion of the object. Moreover, the work touches on the importance of pedestals in public sculpture as a symbol of power.

Notable here is also **Susy Gómez** (Pollença, Mallorca, 1965) and her work *Sin título. Montaña Cavall Bernat, Cala Sant Vicenç, Mallorca* (Untitled. Montaña Cavall Bernat, Cala Sant Vicenç, Mallorca, 1995), a white plaster mountain representing, as a daily landscape, a small bay where the artist grew up. The work alludes to the memory of one's landscape of birth, that which shapes our psyche with a sense of belonging. The imposing orographic silhouettes unfold across the room like an obsessive form, an insurmountable limit on the horizon.

Displayed within the spectrum of *Cold Auras* are also works by **Ángeles Marco** (Valencia, 1947–2008), one of the salient artists in the renewal of so-called New Spanish Sculpture in the 1980s and 1990s, with four pieces from her series *Salto al vacío* (Jump into the Void, 1988–90), and **Jordi Colomer** (Barcelona, 1962) with *Como en casa* (Like Home, 1991), donated by **Juana de Aizpuru** in 2024. There are also works by **José Maldonado** (Madrid, 1962), **Pepe Espaliú** (Córdoba, 1955–1993), **Pep Agut** (Terrassa, 1961), **Antoni Abad** (Lleida, 1956), **Daniel Canogar** (Madrid, 1964), **Paloma Navares** (Burgos, 1947) and **Salomé Cuesta** (Valencia, 1964), among others, as well as *Baranda de Alcamé* (Handrail of Alcamé, 1984) by **Juan Muñoz** (Madrid, 1953 – Santa Eulària des Riu, Eivissa, 2001), which, donated by Patricia Phelps, became the foundational capital that gave rise to the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation.

Juan Luis Moraza, *Éxtasis, estatus, estatua*, 1994 (detalle). Museo Reina Sofía. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz. © Juan Luis Moraza, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026

13. Nuevos materialismos

View of Room 13 «Nuevos materialismos». At the front: Teresa Solar Abboud, *Tuneladora,* 2022. Depósito indefinido de la Fundación Museo Reina Sofía, 2022. © Teresa Solar, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026. Indefinite loan from Fundación Museo Reina Sofia 2022 (Donation by TBA21 Thyssen Bornemisza Art Contemporary). In the background: Ana Laura Aláez, *Tigras y felinas*, 1994. Museo Reina Sofía. © Ana Laura Aláez, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

In recent decades art has started to experiment with its own physical form, with its own materiality, breaking from conventionalisms to explore unknown fields. Forms of thought on the performativity of things and their nature have arisen, leading to rematerialisation conceived as something beyond the human, or its remains after extinction. The new materials are related to new ecologies, to other hierarchies and forms of relating, to the strange bodies of posthumanism and to the radical imagination of organisms that come to wipe out natural kingdoms and conventional scientific categories. It concerns an art that reflects on materials, that responds to new biological and technological realities, and that becomes a space where technology, ecology and mysticism join.

Representative of these new materialisms is the work *Tuneladora* (Tunnelling Machine, 2022), by **Teresa Solar** (Madrid, 1985), a benchmark artist of contemporary sculpture in Spain with international renown. Her work is rooted in the morphology of speech and materialises mainly in large-scale sculptures, drawings and installations. The large-scale sculpture displayed in this room, on loan from the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation, mixes land, the animal marine world and engineering, its morphology binding different sculptural materials, finishes and processes. In this instance, it references the anatomy of the barnacle from a dystopian approach referring to the hybridisation of the contemporary industrial world. The piece is exhibited in the Museo for the first time.

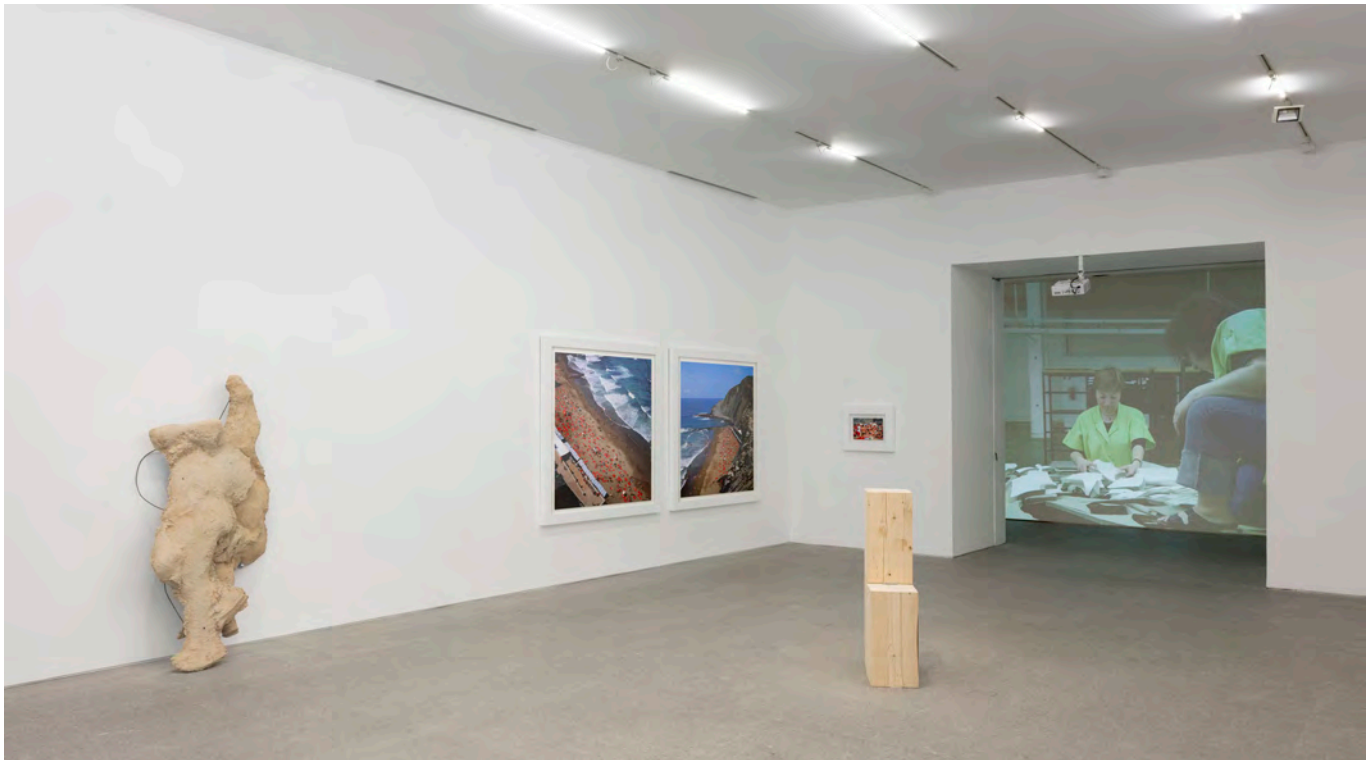
Worthy of mention from the group of Basque sculptures is **Ana Laura Aláez** (Bilbao, 1964), with her

work *Tigras y felinas* (Tigresses and Felines, 1994), which uses fashion elements — skirts, underwear — to reflect on how identity is constructed through what we show and what we hide. The installation, also exhibited for the first time here, is a pivotal work of artistic production in Spain in the 1990s. With a direct and ironic allusion to the wild nature associated with female seduction, Aláez carries out a decisive exercise on volume and void, as well as on the male condition and its forging of the history of sculpture. Ana Laura Aláez has been an emblematic artist of relation and performative sculpture in Spain since the 1990s, developing her work — sculpture, installation, photography — for many years between New York and the Basque Country. Also of note within the Basque art scene is the work of **Sahatsa Jauregi** (Itaparica, Brazil, 1984), **Itziar Okariz** (San Sebastián, 1965), **Sergio Prego** (San Sebastián, 1969), **Jon Mikel Euba** (Amorebieta-Etxano, 1967) and **June Cresp**o (Pamplona, 1982).

The work *Nothing Under a Chair* (1999) by **Ángela de la Cruz** (A Coruña, 1965), recently acquired for the Museo by Spain's Ministry of Culture at ARCO 2025, is on view for the first time in the Reina. At the end of the 1980s, Ángela de la Cruz moved to London, coinciding with the emergence of Young British Artists (YBA). Influenced by their spirit of rupture, the artist developed her own language, which defied the traditional limits of painting and assimilated movements such as Minimalism, Procedural Art and *Supports/Surfaces* painting. Her series *Nothing* (1998-2001) explores the impossibility of being in painting and art work, employing creased and discarded monochrome fabric, while in *Nothing Under a Chair* a large-scale canvas has been stored away under a chair, representing, as the artist explains, "waiting pictures [...]. Incapable, for now, of being anything else. Waiting".

Within these spaces devoted to New Materialisms is the presence of young artists such as **Mònica Planes** (Barcelona, 1992), who with Desvelo III (Sleepless III, 2025) represents the most recent work in this presentation, **Rubén Grilo** (Lugo, 1981) and **Elena Alonso** (Madrid, 1981), whose work *Antojo* (Craving, 2018), a semi-circular arch incorporated into the Museo's architecture, turns the exhibition space into a place where the spectator's body actives the narrative of the piece.

14. Relationalities. Performative Operations with Alien Bodies



View of Room 14 «Relacionalidades. Operaciones performativas con cuerpos extraños». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

In the late 1990s, in response to social isolation, art shifted radically: it focused less on the individual artist and more on collaboration. Creatives started to work in groups, not just to get by in a precarious system, but also to turn their works into spaces of co-existence and social relations. This current, called "relational art", erased the borders between artwork and reality. Artists such as **David Bestué** (Barcelona, 1980) and **Marc Vives** (Barcelona, 1978) turned common domestic actions into symbols of a whole generation. Maider López (San Sebastián, 1975) handed out red towels to bathers at the beach of Itzurun, transforming a sunny afternoon into a collective artwork, while **Santiago Sierra** (Madrid, 1966) denounced racism and exploitation as well as the contradictions of the art system. In her work *Secret Strike* (2006), **Alicia Framis** (Mataró, 1967) records the secrets of major textiles factories in an existential performance of two thousand people frozen in time, her work a reference point in relational practices, in projects encompassing sculpture, architecture, design, clothing and performance, where collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches co-exist with an imaginative, political and feminist stance. This key piece in Framis's trajectory is part of her Secret Strike series, in which she grants visibility to and momentarily paralyses the day-to-day of employees in different work spaces, as in this case with the Galician multi-national clothing company Inditex, in Arteixo (Galicia). **Álvaro Perdices** (Madrid, 1971), meanwhile, works directly with primary school pupils to imagine a different school.

This new way of understanding art also brought in changes to museums, which stopped being sacred temples to open themselves to new communities.

View of Room 14 «Relacionalidades. Operaciones performativas con cuerpos extraños». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

View of Room 17 «Una pintura más pintada». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

Route III.
A New Framework: The Institution, the Market, and the Art that Transcends Both

15. Institutional Genealogy

View of Room 15 «Genealogía institucional». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

For the first time, the Reina Sofía Collections include the genealogy of the Museo, with a view to gathering the main landmarks in the construction of an institutional landscape for Spanish art over the past fifty years. The narrative thread of the room runs from the mid-1970s to 1992, with the unveiling of the Museo's Permanent Collection. The room also surfaces as an exercise in self-representation and recognition of key figures that contributed to creating the Reina Sofía, as well as the institution's own input into its immediate context.

To trace this genealogy, we begin with MEAC (Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo), which came into being in 1968 and became more consolidated in the democracy as a multidisciplinary space that connected with the Movida movement in Madrid. Under the management of Álvaro Martínez-Novillo, from 1981 to 1984, MEAC held and promoted festivals, new languages such as video art and major anthological exhibitions. Initiatives such as the Festivales de Primavera (Spring Festivals) and Salón de los 16 were key to giving young artists visibility and to enriching the museum's collection. Despite its pioneering spirit, its peripheral location, in Madrid's Ciudad Universitaria area, and the lack of institutional support led to its decline. In the 1980s contemporary art was key to casting a new image of Spain, propelled from the sphere of art galleries. The ARCO art fair, therefore, came into being in 1982, under the direction of **Juana de Aizpuru**, to foster still-burgeoning national art collecting.

With the arrival of the democracy, the State sought to cement its cultural structure, and in 1983 created the National Centre of Exhibitions (CNE), directed by **Carmen Giménez**, who gave professional status to the management and promotion of art. And, in 1986, opened by Queen Sofía of Spain and constructed from the old Hospital General de Madrid, designed by Sabatini, the Centro

de Arte Reina Sofía was born as a space devoted to temporary exhibitions. **Eduardo Chillida** (San Sebastián, 1924–2002) was commissioned with designing the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía's initial visual identity, synthesising his language of "void and matter" in Sin título (Boceto para logotipo del Centro de Arte Reina Sofía) (Untitled [Sketch for the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Logo], 1986), to lend an understated prestige to the institution until 1992. The centre, which would integrate the holdings of MEAC, gained international renown though major exhibitions and social support, and officially became a Museo Nacional in 1988, despite not opening its doors until 1990. Nevertheless, it wasn't until September of 1992, under the management of **María Corral**, that its Permanent Collection was publicly unveiled, with Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* the touchstone of its museum discourse.

The artists, critics, politicians and curators that contributed, in its early years, to the creation, promotion and consolidation of the Museo Reina Sofía as an international point of reference today are part of this genealogy. Their imprints are reflected in this room by virtue of documentation, events and actions, for instance the audio from the Encuesta realizada entre los asistentes a la inauguración del MEAC (Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo) (Survey Conducted between Attendees at the Opening of MEAC [Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo], 1975) by **Isidoro Valcárcel Medina** (Murcia, 1937) to question the role of the museum under the dictatorship, and *Concierto de invierno de agua y viento, bajo los auspicios horoscopales de Capricornio-Acuario-Piscis* (Winter Concert of Water and Wind, Under the Horoscopic Auspices of Capricorn-Aquarius-Pisces, 1981) by **Paz Muro** (Cuenca, n.d.), in the lecture hall of the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo (MEAC), in addition to her performance *Paz Muro, nuevamente desposada con el Arte Contemporáneo Transvanguardista* (Paz Muro. Once Again Newly-wed to Contemporary Transavantgarde Art, 1982), at the ARCO '82 fair, in which she calls out gender stereotypes and commercialised art. This ironic "marriage" with the hegemonic painting of those years is carried out as a critique of the transavantgarde and its commercial prominence.

Tino Calabuig (Colmenar de Oreja, 1939), meanwhile, from his activism at the Galería Redor, used documentary film to critically dissect the birth of the art market at the same art fair, as well as meticulously documenting the transfer of Guernica to the Reina Sofía, with his video included in this exhibition. Or, for instance, the *Prototipo-volumen 1 Teoría* (Prototype-Volume 1 Theory) by **Luis Pérez Minguez** (Madrid, 1950-2014), with numerous figures of the time from the cultural sphere of contemporary art. These actions were political as well as aesthetic.

Viewers can also observe two works by **Salvador Dalí** (Figueres, 1904–1989) for the first time in the Reina: *La Torre* (The Tower, 1981) and *Gran masturbador detrás de las arcadas* (The Great Masturbator Behind Arcades, 1981). His legacy on behalf of the Spanish State in 1990, which attributed fifty-six works to the Museo Reina Sofía, contributed to securing the foundational nucleus of the avant-gardes in the new Museo Nacional and to laying the foundations for the acquisition of the Collections, along with the legacy of Picasso (1981).

16. Videographic Cultures of the 1980s: *The Sublime Image*

View of Room 16 «Culturas videográficas de los años ochenta: La imagen sublime». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

Video surfaced in the mid-1960s when the home system of recording on an electromagnetic support was launched on the US market. In its early years of existence, its main driving force was the television industry, yet its use among artists in the first half of the 1970s became widespread through documentary video, electronic experimentation and performative recordings of conceptual art. Video art was forged in independent circles and although its arrival in institutions would take longer, it still triggered a regeneration of forms of audiovisual production.

Through the drive of curator, contemporary art manager and video art pioneer, Guadalupe Echevarría, the Reina Sofía placed technological and audiovisual languages at the heart of its initial project. *The Sublime Image* (1987) was the first video-art-centred show organised by the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. Curated by Manuel Palacio, the exhibition surveyed the history of video art in Spain between 1970 and 1987, and, spanning from 1970s conceptual art to experimentations with video clips in the 1980s, it was articulated in complementary spheres. On one side, a free-access space that offered five daily sessions with a selection of thirty-nine single-channel works, accompanied by a graphic history of Spanish video and an unpublished bibliographic collection for consultation, revealing the documentary precarity of the medium. And on the other, a themed programme of paid-access screenings, in a direct allusion to the model of the Filmoteca, including round-table discussions, professional encounters and the presentation of the programme Time Code, an international co-production in which Spain's national broadcaster Televisión Española participated in a video with Xavier Villaverde. *The Sublime Image* was the institutional crowning moment of Spanish video art, encompassing at once its creative maturity and the conclusion to a first cycle of enthusiasm.

On view in this room, via eight monitors, are the works of **Carles Pujol** (Barcelona, 1947) 81 x 65

(1980), **Eugenia Balcells** (Barcelona, 1943) *Indian Circle* (1982), **Manuel Muntaner** (Barcelona, 1938) *Especial 84* (1984), **Julián Álvarez** (León, 1950) *Batlàntic* (1985), **Antonio F. Cano** (Pozoblanco, Córdoba, 1960)/**Pedro Garhel** (Puerto de la Cruz, 1952 – La Guancha, 2005) *Infinito 5* (1985), **Celia García Bravo** (Madrid, 1963)/Pedro Roldán (Madrid, 1960)/**Francisco Utray** (Madrid, 1962) *Otro hombre en el hogar* (Another Man in the Home, 1986), **Antoni Miralda** (Terrasa, Barcelona, 1942), *Honeymoon Top* (1986) and **Xavier F. Villaverde** (A Coruña, 1958), *Alicia en Galicia caníbal* (1986). It also includes the videographic work of **Javier Codesal** (Huesca,1958) and **Raúl Rodríguez** (Villaza, León, 1959), *Pornada* (1984). A pioneer of video art in Spain, **Javier Codesal** began his career in the 1980s, exploring the possibilities of the medium as a space of sensorial experience and visual thought. Pornada builds a coarse and poetic portrait of rural life from a specific territory, a "pornada" (a wordplay with "porn" and "working day") in Villeza (León), and the material impossibility of finding a telephone. The film, the winner of two awards, alternates testimonies, precarious interiors and the visual planes of the countryside to activate a reflection on isolation, desire and community.

17. A More Painted Painting

View of Room 17 «Una pintura más pintada». On the right: Guillermo Pérez Villalta, *Grupo de personas en un atrio o alegoría del arte y la vida o del presente y el futuro*, 1975-1976. Museo Reina Sofía. © Guillermo Pérez Villalta, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026. On the left: Manolo Quejido, *Silla y máquina de escribir (Máquina sentada en silla)*, 1978-1979. Museo Reina Sofía. © Manolo Quejido, VEGAP, Madrid, 2026. Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

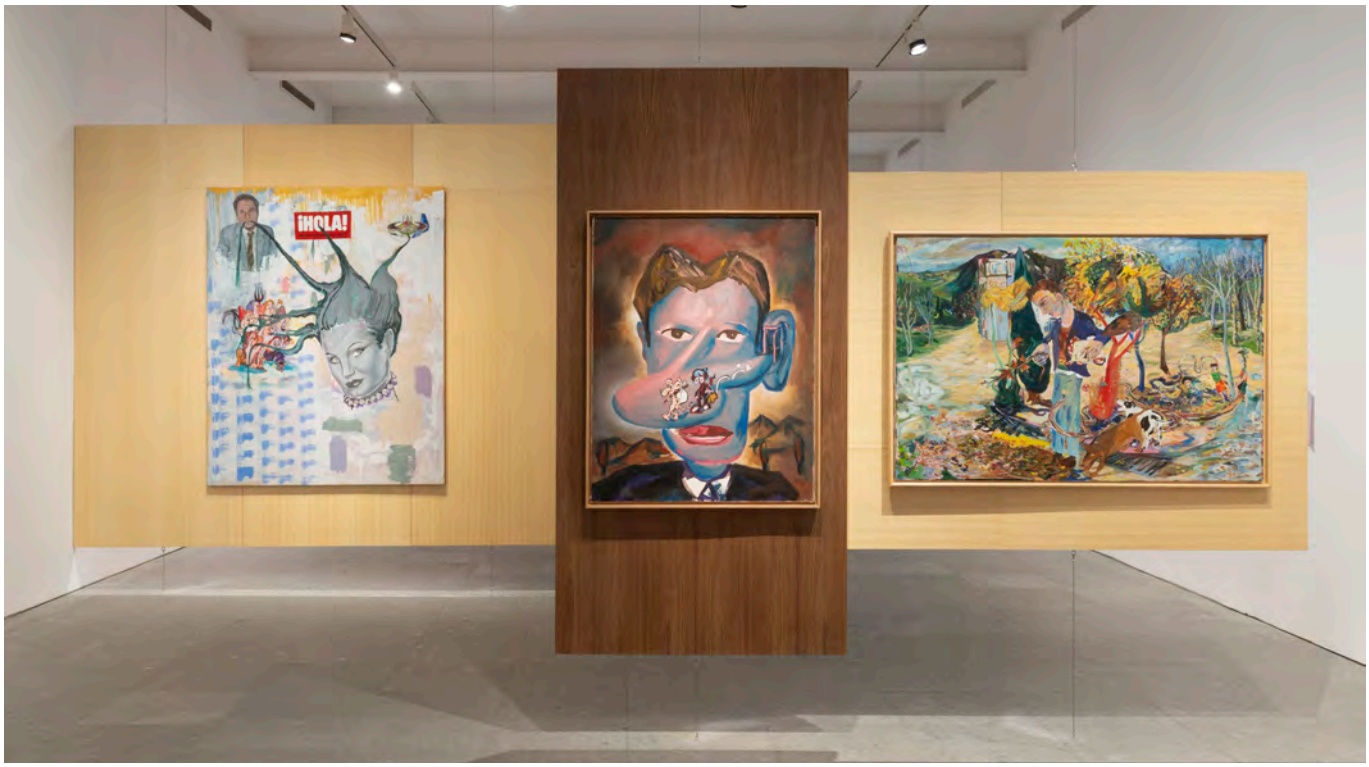
"A More Painted Painting" was an expression used by art critic Juan Manuel Bonet to refer to new Spanish avant-garde painting from the 1980s that disassociated art from social discourse, promulgating depoliticised painting in which the object is not more than the painting itself. In this avant-garde, art critics like Ángel González, Juan Antonio Aguirre, Juan Manuel Bonet, María Corral, Francisco Rivas, Fernando Huici and Federico Jiménez Losantos played a key role. The transavantgarde, as it was called, rejected conceptualism and any political form of art to align with

the market and be viewed favourably by critics in the media and among the curators of the time, sparking its institutional neglect in the decades that followed. However, in hindsight, there were clearly positions outside the doctrine, displaying biases of sociopolitical involvement and even with a conceptual approach.

This room recovers artists, mostly from Spain, who were part of three core exhibitions promoted by critics who backed the recovery of Spanish painting: *1980, Madrid DF and Otras Figuraciones* (Other Figurations). Central to the room is a work by **Guillermo Pérez Villalta** G*rupo de personas en un atrio o alegoría del arte y la vida o del presente y el futuro* (Group of People in an Atrium or Allegory of Art and Life or from the Present and the Future, 1975/1976), a large-scale triptych gathering a generation of artists, critics and gallerists associated with Madrid's New Figuration, which emerged in the Spanish capital during the 1970s, and in which twenty-two figures are depicted, among them Pérez-Villalta, Carlos Alcolea, Chema Cobo, Carlos Franco, Luis Gordillo and Ángel González.

In the same space we find *Silla y máquina de escribir* (Máquina sentada en silla) (Chair and Typewriter [Machine Seated on a Chair], 1978–1979) by **Manolo Quejido** (Seville, 1946), along with *Matisse de día, Matisse de noche* (Matisse by Day, Matisse by Night, 1977) by **Carlos Alcolea** (A Coruña, 1949 – Madrid, 1992). Alcolea, regarded as one of the most relevant artist-theorists of his generation, adopted a more intellectualised position from the group of Madrid's New Figuration. The work displayed pays homage to one of the reference-points for the movement, the French avant-garde's hedonist par excellence, Henri Matisse. The composition is structured around the Moebius strip, a symbol of the continuity the artist employed to lead the gaze into a continuous loop between plain colours and humanoid forms at the limits between reality and fantasy, a structure that commemorates the eternity of painting.

Arising out of the new architectural design of spaces, we enter into an arrangement of paintings suspended on floating boards with the works of **Eva Lootz** (Viena, 1940), **Juan Uslé** (Cantabria,



View of Room 17 «Una pintura más pintada». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

1954), **Miguel Ángel Campano** (Madrid, 1948 – Cercedilla, 2018), **Chema Cobo** (Tarifa, Cádiz, 1952 – Málaga, 2023), **Alfonso Albacete** (Antequera, 1950), **Juan Ugalde** (Antequera, 1950), **Carlos Franco** (Madrid, 1951), **Javier Utray** (Madrid, 1945-2008) and **Patricia Gadea** (Madrid, 1960 – Palencia, 2006), one of the most incisive voices of Madrid Figuration in the 1980s and 1990s who linked critical experimentation to Pop Art and comic books. Following her rupture with painter Juan Ugalde in 1993, Gadea aligned her painting towards a radical revision of female archetypes and the traditional roles of women. In her work *Patosa* (Clumsy Woman, 1993), she draws from Pop iconography and comic-book language to focus on, with biting satire, the representation of the modern woman, who, despite flaunting the hair of the mighty Medusa, remains tied to domestic care and the world of celebrity magazines.

Grupo Atlántica arose from the need to vindicate Spanish and local art in the 1980s, playing a key role in the normalisation and exposure of contemporary art from Galicia and consolidating its art scene, as well as contributing to its recognition within Spain's artistic landscape. The works displayed here from this group include large-scale, colourist, almost totemic works like *O siameses do círculo* (The Siamese of the Circle (1985) by **Menchu Lamas** (Vigo, 1954), where the reference to identity lies in the iconographic motifs from popular tradition, in a similar fashion to *Tou Tou* (1984) by **Francisco Leiro** (Cambados, 1957). Also on view in the room are the works of **Antón Reixa** (Vigo, 1957) and **Antón Patiño** (Monforte de Lemos, Lugo, 1957)

18. Art and Reality in 1980s Photographic Cultures

View of Room 18 «Arte y realidad en las culturas fotográficas de los ochenta». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

As in the previous spaces on videographic cultures and paintings from the period, the room centred on photographic practices from the 1970s and 1980s also falls within the narrative that traces this itinerary devoted to the institutionalisation of art and its international apertura, or opening to the outside, during the Transition and the early years of Spanish democracy. A period in which

the photographic horizon expanded as a medium, ultimately becoming a preferred tool to reveal the constructed nature of image, which was growing increasingly distant from the centuries-long demand to imitate reality that had characterised artistic practices.

Setting out from this context, the room is structured by, firstly, a journey through photography in the early stages of the democracy via two key series by two women artists: *Peluquería* (Hairdresser's) by **Ouka Leele** (Madrid, 1957 – 2022) and *España occulta* (Hidden Spain) by **Cristina García Rodero** (Puertollano, 1949), divided symbolically by the work *Yo espeso los colores* (I Thicken the Colours, 2021) by **Belén Rodríguez** (Valladolid, 1981) — a salient artist in the renewal of contemporary pictorial practice — providing a backdrop that acts to materially and conceptually split the room in two halves. And, secondly, it throws into relief the role the creation of the Museo Reina Sofía played in this institutional drive, particularly in relation to the exhibition *Four Directions. Contemporary Spanish Photography*, 1970–1990 (Museo Reina Sofía, 1991), curated by Manuel Santos, the genesis of the Museo's contemporary Spanish photography collection, owing in part to a significant donation by the publishing house Lunwerg.

After the brilliant humanist and social stage of the AFAL group's documentary photography, in the early 1970s one of the landmarks that would shape some of the output in this period came into view: the emergence of the magazine Nueva Lente (New Lens) founded by **Pablo Pérez-Mínguez** (Madrid, 1946 – 2012), **Jorge Rueda** (Almería, 1943 – Málaga, 2011) and Carlos Serrano in 1971. Within its sphere, photographic practices became exercises of fiction, adopting avant-garde aesthetics such as collage and Surrealist poetry, recovering techniques of nineteenth-century pictorialism and building a theatrical photography, with photographer Ouka Leele's *Peluquería* (1979–1980) one of the best examples.

Leele, one of the core figures in Madrid's Movida movement, presented a kind of Pop hagiography of modern life, a series of portraits of her friends and acquaintances dressed in eccentric headpieces, among them some of the protagonists in other rooms, such as Ceesepe and El Hortelano. Along with Ouka Leele, we encounter other artists who asserted the possibility of art photography detached from being constrained to the real, for instance Jorge Rueda and Pablo Pérez-Mínguez, and **Manuel Vilariño** (A Coruña, 1952), **Juan Ramón Yuste** (Madrid, 1952 – 2010), **Chema Madoz** (Madrid, 1958), **Pere Formiguera** (Barcelona, 1952-2013) and **Toni Catany** (Llucmajor, 1942 – Barcelona, 2013).

The second part of the room revolves around Cristina García Rodero's series *España oculta* (1973-1989), one of the most popular from Spanish documentary photography, in which the artist, from an anthropological and humanistic gaze, captures an anthology of the customs and folklore of Spain. Alongside it are also works by other artists who, despite being part of a long-haul documentary tradition, also cut their teeth on the pages of Nueva Lente, mutating their aesthetic towards a patently personal and subjective gaze, for instance **Koldo Chamorro** (Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1949 – Pamplona, 2009), **Alberto García-Alix** (León, 1956), **Vari Caramés** (Ferrol, A Coruña, 1953) and *Clemente Bernad* (Pamplona, 1963). Works that bear the weight of the documentary tradition of black and white opposite the colour exception of other works, such as those by **Marta Sentís** (Barcelona, 1949) and **Xurxo Lobato** (A Coruña, 1956).

View of Room 19 «Crítica de la representación». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

19. Critique of Representation

The development of contemporary critical thought on the image gave rise to the questioning of representation, a process in which photography would play a key role, and which today has been applied to all contemporary art disciplines.

Under these premises, the room brings together different representations of landscape, one of the classic genres handed down by tradition, by way of successive deconstructions of the notion of nature and place in representation, approached from irony, art history, historical memory, poetics and the linguistic literalism of tautology.

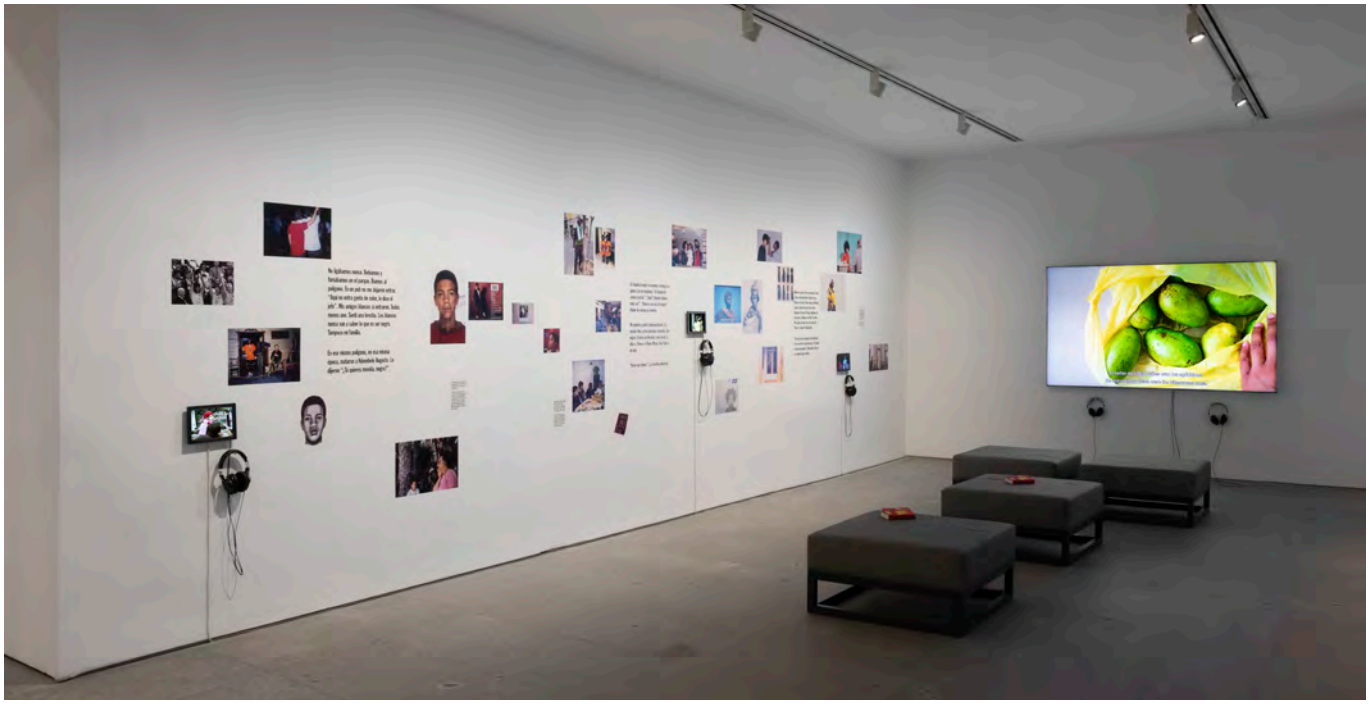
Salient among them are two key works of art-making around the critique of representation, and which chronologically bookmark the beginning and end of the period. On the one hand, the series *Herbarium* (1982–1985) by **Joan Fontcuberta** (Barcelona, 1955), a pivotal photographer and theorist in photography in Spain whose work primarily seeks to dismount the acritical trust in the image, and its supposed objectivity. This complete series, a new acquisition of the Museo's in 2025, takes as its point of reference the scientistic nature of the botanical series by German photographer Karl Blossfeldt, to present, in reality, compositions that recreate plant forms with plant, animal and plastic waste, and other discarded objects, which the artist photographs and accompanies with ostensibly scientific classification, but which, through irony, are also part of the game between the reality and fiction he is proposing.

At the opposite side of the room we find *«Paisajes de siempre» 18* (Alexandre Calame: «Lago Leman». 1849) ["Timeless Landscapes" 18 (Alexandre Calame: Lake Leman. 1849], 2024) by **Mateo Maté** (Madrid, 1964), who represents one of the classical landscapes of the Swiss painter via fragments

of uniform fabric from armies from around the world with the characteristic camouflage motif.

The design evokes the marks of colour from nature in the same way as they are perceived by the human eye, precisely how the Impressionist painters studied in the nineteenth century, a discovery used from that point on to make military uniforms. The artist's intention with the series was, as he explains: "to give back to art what war had stolen from it". Another work in the room which stresses the filter that artistic creation applies to the representation of a supposed reality is *Sistema de gradación de lo real* (Grading System of the Real, 2002) by **Dora García** (Valladolid, 1965), which is part of the set of works donated by gallerist Juana de Aizpuru to the Museo in 2024, where a curtain on a window modulates our perception of what we see through it, thereby establishing a play on meanings in the limits between art and life. On the opposite wall, *Llum* (6 finestres) (Light [6 Windows], 1993) by **Ignasi Aballí** (Barcelona, 1958), establishes itself as a life-size reproduction of the windows of the artist's studio exposed to sunlight for a number of days. The material memory of fixed light with the passing of time — in other words photography — is a subtle commentary on the window of perspective in Western pictorial tradition.

And Serra de Busa (1989) by **Perejaume** (Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona, 1957), in which the Catalan experimental artist and poet turns the pictorial stretcher into a protagonist — no longer a support but rather a contour and border, evoking the silhouette of the Pre-Pyrenees mountains in Catalonia. Here topography becomes a cultural construct, revealing the artificiality of all representation of territory.



View of Room 20 «Lo afro está en el centro». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

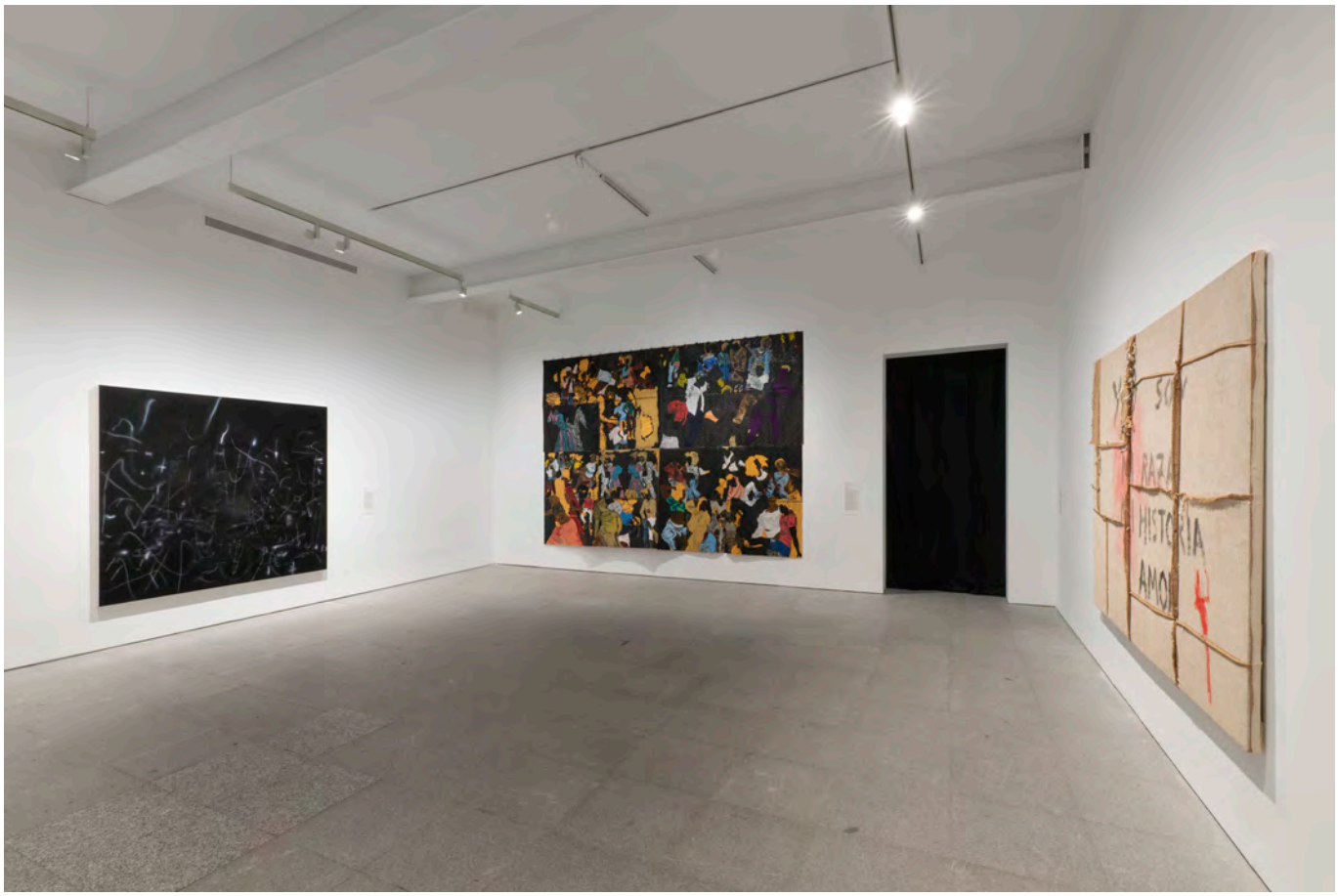
20. «Lo afro está en el centro» (The African Is at the Centre)

"The African is at the Centre" is a slogan used by communities that organise the Afro Awareness Festival in Madrid and which renews the need for visibility and cultural recognition in the anti-racist struggle of African diaspora and Black communities in Spain. This chapter presents a selection of practices which

recognise the diversity of a minority population in Western countries, and which is also celebrated by cultures in Cuba, Brazil and the USA. It brings together a series of aesthetic reflections on identity of African descent, expressions of the Black political body and the affirmation of social presence resulting from centuries of colonisation processes.

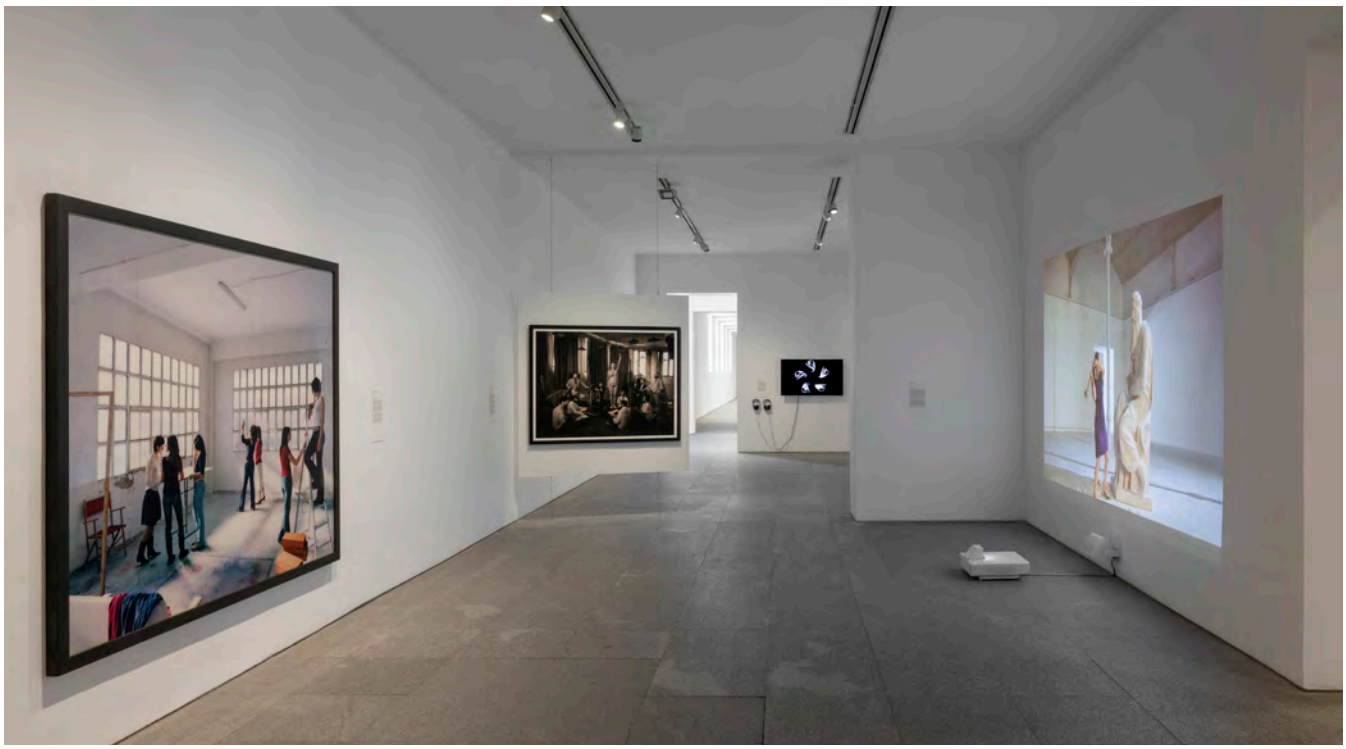
In Spanish art-making — in addition to the pioneering voice of **Pocho Guimaraes** (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 1951 – Málaga, 2025) and the photographic essay of **Agnes Essonti** (L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, 1996), the youngest artist on Floor 4 — a key work is the installation *Y tú, ¿por qué eres negro?* (And You, Why Are You Black?, 2024) by **Rubén H. Bermúdez** (Madrid, 1981), one of the leading voices in anti-racist activism in Spain. The piece is made up of posters, videos, photographs and images and the film A todos nos gusta el plátano (We All Like Plantain), whose narrative construction starts from a personal biographic framework to reach the need for the recognition of Blackness as a condition built in collectiveness.

Displayed in this room is also *Femenine in nine, part 4* (2023), by **Julie Mehretu** (Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 1970), a long-term loan from the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation (2024). Julie Mehretu, a New York resident, is one of the most important and influential painters in the international art scene and maintains an active and intersectional position in defending the memory and transnational culture



View of Room 20 «Lo afro está en el centro». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

of African diaspora and the civil rights of the Afro-American and LGBTQI+ communities. Mehretu's work has redefined the genealogy of abstraction from a political point of view: her painting draws from social events and movements that have shaped twenty-first-century history.



View of Room 21 «Prácticas de género. Coreografías sociales para el nuevo siglo». Photo by: Roberto Ruiz

21. Gender Practices. Social Choreographies for the New Century

The progress of feminisms and LGBTQI+ rights in recent decades has marked a shift in the political and social agenda of Western democracies in the twenty-first century towards more equal societies. In parallel, this great diversity of subjectivities has been accompanied by new forms of representation, which in turn have driven forward artistic languages from the period. The contribution of feminism in contemporary artistic practices has been key to reconfiguring the canon and, therefore, tradition. The visibility of the work of women artists, commonly neglected or erased from the history of the art canon, is one of the challenges faced by art institutions around the world. This also applies to the Museo Reina Sofía and its Collections, in which the presence of women is below 15%. In short, ongoing work required to reach equality which is still in progress.

Denouncement of the prevalence of a "culture of rape" in our society runs through the series On Rape (2019) by artist **Laia Abril** (Barcelona, 1986), a work acquired by Spain's Ministry of Culture and allocated to the Museo in the past edition of ARCO. The series, part of a broader project, *Una historia de la misoginia* (A History of Misogyny), was started following the impact of the gang rape in the La Manada (Wolf Pack) case in Spain. From a conceptual approach, these three large-format images do not represent victims directly, but rather power structures that protect, normalise and perpetuate sexual violence against women.

Other works in this space confront the male canon of art history from different standpoints: the video that records the performance *Habla* (Speak, 2008) by **Cristina Lucas** (Úbeda, 1973), in which the artist strikes a replica of Moses by Michelangelo; and Estudio (Studio, 2001) by **Carmela**

García (Lanzarote, 1964), an art space historically consecrated by the male gaze and the passive representation of women, and in which gender roles are subverted; and the proud gesture of **Marina Vargas** (Granada, 1980) under the male gaze — in this case of close friends — in Romper el canon (Breaking the Canon, 2021), which vindicates her presence as a woman and non-normative body in the representational sphere of the studio.

Salient among the videographic works are *Sí Señor* (Yes, Sir, 2014–2015) by **Abigail Reyes** (San Salvador, 1984), a donation by Mario Cáder-Frech, the driving force behind the recently formed Cáder Institute of Central American Art, to the Museo Reina Sofía Foundation (USA). In this visual collage the artist questions women's forms of representation in subaltern roles via scenes from Latin American soap operas, where the female characters obediently respond to the men.

Queer theory and the representation of new sexual identities have challenged the Western artistic canon, as evinced by some of the works in this space. *In Mujeres* (Women,1993/2024), **Pilar Albarracín** (Seville, 1968) approaches the theme of transsexuality via a series of photographic portraits of sex workers in Seville, presented inside the visual frames of bathroom mirrors. In specular logic, these portraits, placed at the eye level of the observer, work as devices of the visibility and reaffirmation of a full identity, as they also establish an affirmation of dissidence already announced in the title of the piece. The work also refers to the history of gender critique in Spanish art and was shown at the first exhibition on this subject matter in Spain, 100%, co-curated by Mar Villaespesa and Luisa López in 1993. This representation of dissident identities also appears in other pieces from these rooms, for instance the five photographs from the series *Portraits* (1993/1997) by **Catherine Opie** (Sandusky, Ohio, 1961), which is part of the legacy-bearing loan by gallerist Soledad Lorenzo to the Museo, and featuring people from the San Francisco leather community, drag queens, performers, trans people and close friends of the artist.

For its part, *Un Mystique determinado* (A Certain Mystique, 2003) by **Carles Congost** (Olot, 1970) appears here as one of the emblematic pieces at the turn of the twenty-first century in Spain. The work is presented as a musical with tracks composed by the band **Astrud**, where a young man gives up his sporting career and leaves his girlfriend after feeling "touched" by an artistic inspiration — a kind of mystique, as he calls it — leading him to embrace his homosexuality and vocation as a video artist. With his satirical tone, Congost reveals not only the decline of tradition as an unbreakable myth, but also the need to leave behind an outmoded hegemonic model of the artist to pave the way for new forms of subjectivity embedded in a broad social and creative fabric.

Press Dossier

COLLECTION. CONTEMPORARY ART: 1975 – PRESENT

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