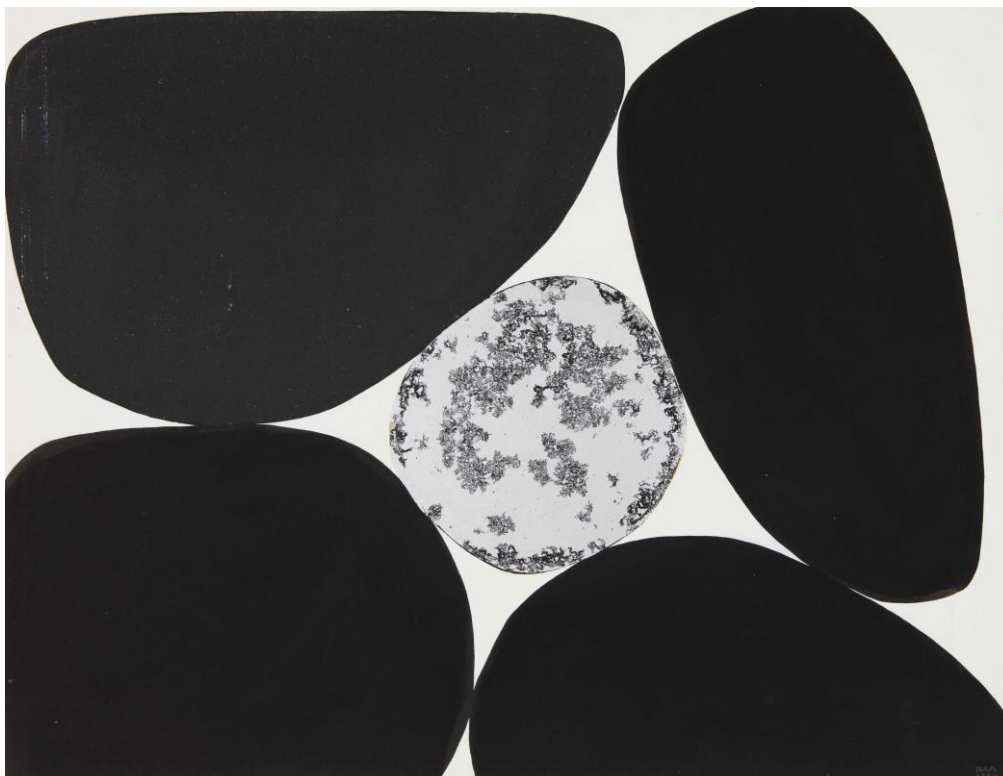


ANNA-EVA BERGMAN
From North to South, Rhythms



ANNA-EVA BERGMAN
N° 76-1970 Pierre de Castille 6 [Stone of Castile 6], 1970
India ink and metal sheet on paper
49,5 x 64,5 cm
FONDATION HARTUNG-BERGMAN

DATES :	October 22, 2020 / May 17, 2021
LOCATION:	Palacio de Velázquez. Retiro's Park (Madrid)
ORGANIZATION:	Fundació Per Amor a l'Art – Bombas Gens Centre d'Art and Hartung-Bergman Foundation, in collaboration with Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
CURATORSHIP:	Christine Lamothe and Nuria Enguita
COORDINATION:	Andrea Pérez Envid

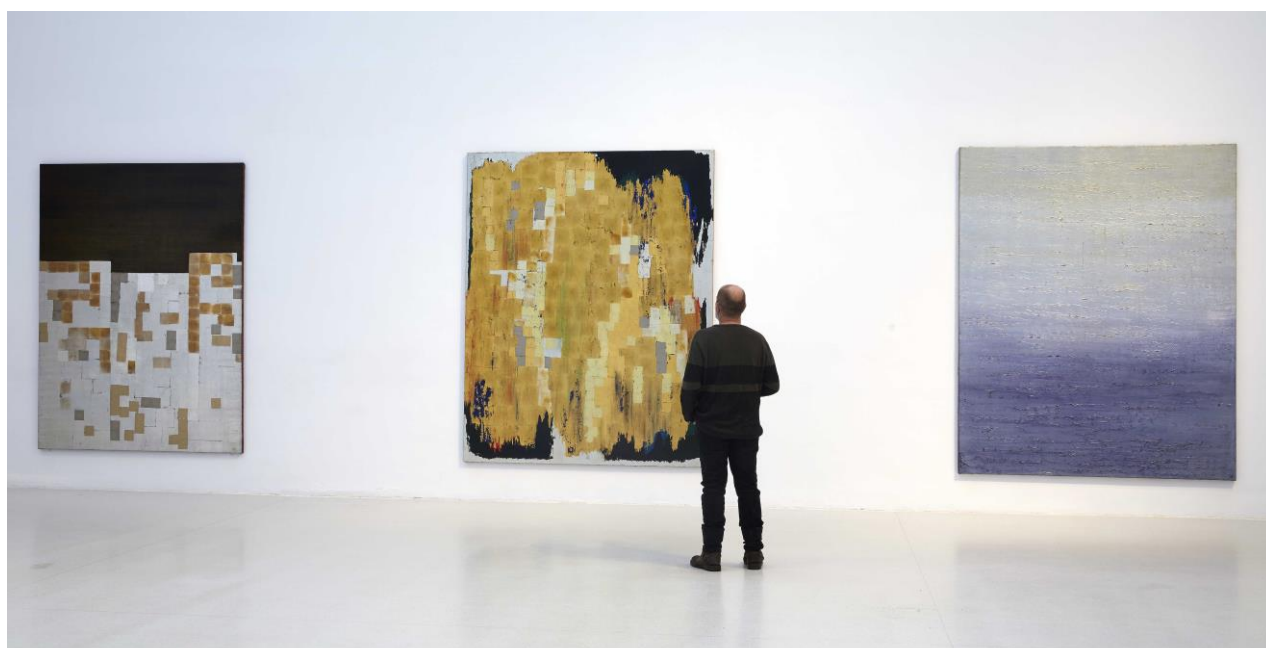
The Museo Reina Sofía presents ***From North to South, Rhythms***, an exhibition by **Anna-Eva Bergman** (Stockholm, 1909 - Grasse, France, 1987), whose work stands as **one of the most rigorous and relevant abstract art projects in the second half of the twentieth century**.

Bergman's artistic practice is structured through rhythm, an element she considers to be essential in the painting process, based on combining shapes, lines and colors. Her work can be seen as a very particular approach to landscape painting, formally connected to American abstract art, especially to Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, and aiming to take the viewer into the experience of infinity, as in the contemplation of nature.

At the beginning of her career, Bergman's work was very influenced by the German artists of the New Objectivity movement. However, since the 1950s, it underwent a radical shift as she focused on pictorial abstraction, building a distinctive world around line and rhythm. Landscape became also a pivotal frame of reference in her work, very influenced as well by natural motifs and Scandinavian mythology.

Through a selection of 70 works made between 1962 and 1971, some of them almost never exhibited before, the show addresses the most recurrent themes in Bergman's oeuvre, shaped after a series of influential trips to Spain and Norway: **A permanent dialogue between the North and the South, the luminosity of landscapes, the fjords, the stars, the stones, the mountains, the boats and the cliffs.**

The exhibition, organized by the Fundació Per Amor a l'Art - Bombas Gens Center d'Art and the Hartung Bergman Foundation, in collaboration with the Museo Reina Sofía, is curated by **Christine Lamothe y Nuria Enguita**. It was previously shown at Bombas Gens (Valencia) in 2018, and it is the first project in the collaboration agreement between Museo Reina Sofía and Fundació Per Amor a l'Art– Bombas Gens Centre d'Art.



Exhibition view **ANNA-EVA BERGMAN. *From North to South, Rhythms***
Palacio de Velázquez, Museo Reina Sofía. October 2020
Photo credit: Joaquín Cortés/Román Lores. Archive of Museo Reina Sofía

Nature as the main subject

The exhibition, to be seen at Palacio de Velázquez in Retiro's park, is not a regular retrospective. It shows a selection of works from 1962 to 1971, a specific timeframe when Bergman travelled frequently to Spain and Norway, that she will translate as a dialogue between the North and the South in her landscapes, "formally similar, but with a very different approach to color and light", as states Nuria Enguita, co-curator of the exhibition.

The show, rather than being chronologically organized, is structured through the themes and motifs present in Bergman's work. The exhibition starts in the main room of Velázquez's Palace, displaying works such as *Night Landscape* (1968) and *Ice Wall* (1971), that show most of the characteristic motifs in Bergman's work, that can be seen throughout the rest of the exhibition: landscapes, horizon lines, walls, mountains and natural elements such as air, water or fire.

On the right side of the palace, the visitor can delve into works inspired by Norwegian landscapes such as *Transparent Mountain* (1967) or *Big Red Finnmark* (1967), that shows the icy views of glaciers and fjords in Finnmark, the northeast region of the country.



ANNA-EVA BERGMAN
N° 31-1965 Finnmark, 1965
Vinyl and metal sheet on canvas
130 x 162 cm
FONDATION HARTUNG-BERGMAN

In front of these landscapes, the visitor can contemplate her *Horizons*, inspired by the landscapes of Carboneras, a region in the south of Spain where she travelled in 1962. There we find the impressive *Horizons* (1971), a painting that is being shown to the public for the first time, after being almost half a century kept in a storehouse after the artist finished it. As Nuria Enguita explains: "The horizon, a quintessential place of poetry, here is also the place of the political day-to-day. Bergman felt that the void, the vastness and absences of these Almeria

expanses spoke to her deepest self differently from the legends of the sublime northern landscapes, crystalline and iconic. Here, in this barren land, the horizon is the place where the gaze sets continuously".

Cliffs and boats are some of the motifs that can be seen in the exhibition. In Anna-Eva Bergman's work there are recurrent references to Scandinavian mythology, for example in the use of boats, considered to be a spectral and deadly symbol, having strong presence in Nordic legends. *Black boat* (1971) shows how Bergman turns this motif into simple geometrical shapes, such as triangles or lines, covering completely the surface of the canvas, and hiding the landscape in the background.

As well as Scandinavian landscapes and symbols, Anna-Eva Bergman was also very interested in the colors and nature of Spain. Her frequent trips to Andalusia echo in paintings such as *Carboneras* (1963) and the influence of the landscapes that she visited in the interior of the Iberian Peninsula can be seen in her Indian ink on paper series *Stones of Castile*. These works show the important transformations in Bergman's oeuvre in a decade of continuous travels to Spain, evolving towards the use of simpler shapes and a more restricted chromatic palette.

About Anna-Eva Bergman and her work

Anna-Eva Bergman studied in the State School for Arts and Crafts in Oslo. From the earliest paintings she made, in 1924, she was interested in capturing the peculiar light of the uninhabited, motionless landscape of Norway. In April of 1929 she left for Paris, where she met the artist Hans Hartung, joining the world of the *School of Paris*.

In the beginning, her art was influenced by the German artists of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* [New Objectivity]. Her drawings of representative characters of the German and French bourgeoisie revealed a comical and satirical outlook. She used primarily inks and watercolors. From 1933 to 1934, she moved with Hans Hartung to Menorca, in the Balearic Islands, near the small town of Fornells. The paintings and watercolors she made there show Anna-Eva Bergman's interest in the golden number and in architecture, and they announce the simple, constructed forms of her later work.

After an artistic hiatus, she resumed painting vigorously in 1946, and in late 1948 she embraced a non-figurative approach. She invented and constructed a unique universe around line and rhythm. Definitively established in Paris in 1953, her work consolidates the exploration of lines and color surfaces, opposing to the informalist tendencies in vogue. In 1958, Anna-Eva Bergman assembled, for the first time in her painting, a repertory of the forms she had been developing in her work since 1952: rock, moon, star, planet, mountain, stele, tree, tomb, valley, boat, prow, and mirror.



ANNA-EVA BERGMAN
N° 36-1965 Falaise [Cliff], 1965
Oil and metal sheet on canvas
195 x 97 cm
FONDATION HARTUNG-BERGMAN

In 1962 Bergman and Hartung made an influential trip to Spain. Since then, the artist added in her paintings a new theme to her vocabulary of forms: the horizon, inspired by the landscape of Carboneras, Spain, where they returned regularly until the early 1970s. Bergman's work evolves into the use of simpler shapes and a more restricted chromatic palette.

In 1964, the couple took a boating trip along the Norwegian coast, beyond the North Cape, and came back with nearly a thousand photographs. Bergman began working with those photographs and sketches and using them for several years in her paintings.

In 1967 he represented Norway in the painting section of the São Paulo Biennial. Anna-Eva Bergman was appointed in 1984 as a member of the European Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Catalogue

The Museo Reina Sofía is publishing a catalogue of the exhibition, in Spanish and English, which includes an introduction by **Thomas Schlessner**, director of the Hartung-Bergman Foundation, and a presentation by **Nuria Enguita**, director of the IVAM and co-curator of the exhibition, and **Manuel Borja-Villel**, director of the Museo Nacional Reina Sofía. In addition to a list of works and an artistic biography of Anna-Eva Bergman, the catalogue also contains essays by various authors such as **Romain Mathieu**, **Teresa Lanceta** or **Michael Tarantino**.



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