Tàpies
From Within

June 21st – November 3rd 2013
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Tàpies: From Within
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In a joint exhibition held in two venues, the Fundació Antoni Tàpies and the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya (MNAC) are bringing you the exhibition Tàpies. From within, curated by Vicent Todoli. With a selection of more than 140 works going from 1945 to 2011, the exhibition puts the emphasis on the artist’s untiring and even obsessive experimentation and the development of his iconography and his vocabulary of signs, matter, colours and everyday objects.

In his first involvement with the figure of Antoni Tàpies, Vicent Todoli offers us an unusual view based on a selection of works from the artist’s own collection, complemented with works belonging to the Fundació Antoni Tàpies Collection. The exhibition ventures an approach to Tàpies not subject to what we know, so much as to what the artist’s itinerary reveals. Antoni Tàpies reserved a large part of his work for his studio and for the foundation. The exhibition Tàpies. From the Inside, in this respect, has been conceived exclusively on the basis of the works kept at the artist’s home, many of them unknown until now, and at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, and focuses mainly on two aspects of his extensive production, which the artist himself mentions in his Memòria personal. On one hand are the ‘matteric’ or mural paintings, which we find mainly in the rooms of the Museu Nacional d’Art de
Catalunya, and on the other are the poor objects and materials, which can be visited at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies.

Vicent Todolí’s project sets out to emphasise the freedom of defining, as conditions and limits, places like the studio, the home and the artist’s foundation, nearby, intimate places that accumulate Antoni Tàpies’s works and periods. The exhibition, therefore, doesn’t try to establish an order in these works or categorise the studio works, but makes a point of preserving its paradoxes, its waste, its contradictions and surprises.

‘Towards the end of 1958, I greatly increased ... the works done with what is called poor material. I felt the need to persist and go deeper with the entire message of what is insignificant, worn or dramatised by time. Alongside the large mural compositions —aloud or in silence—, the day’s refuse. In fact, it was the most conscious resumption of subjects that had often attracted me. In my research, I had discovered this material, one I find loaded with strange suggestions, which is cardboard. A grey, anonymous material that won’t be easily manipulated, for which very reason the slightest mark of the hand torments it and destroys it. But the piece of cardboard, the box, the lid, the tray ..., dirty clothes (socks, T-shirt, underpants...), old furniture, everyday objects, not used as a representation or theme in the picture but as real bodies, objects... And in this sense I’ve been influenced by or related to some Dadaist forerunner, Duchamp, Schwitters... But there are other aspects of the ‘ascetic’ function, of the ‘sacralisation’ of the world around us which I’ve referred to... Of the ‘supreme identity’ of Samsara with Nirvana. The use of new materials, collage and assemblage, became quite widespread among some new artists of that time.’


The exhibition at the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya

The exhibition at the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya shows the evolution of Antoni Tàpies’s work through a tour taking in the whole of his artistic production, from 1945 to 2011. From his first paintings, done in the 1940s, Tàpies embarked on an aesthetic research that involved experimenting with materials and shapes, leading in the 1950s to a form of expression of his own, the ‘matteric’ paintings, which earned him international recognition.

From the pastiness and thickness of the paint in the early years to the inclusion of new materials like varnish, latex and sheet metal in the following decades, the exhibition shows Tàpies’s perpetual interest in matter from two different but complementary points of view: as a rejection of the traditional artistic language and as a synonym for change and transformation. Throughout the exhibition one can see the artist’s uniring experimentation and the development of his iconography and his vocabulary made up of signs, matter, colours and everyday objects, as well as the conception of the work of art as a vehicle for the relationship with mystery, the forces of the universe and of nature.

The selection offers a new vision, accepting the freedom and the limitations of starting only with what the artist had kept for himself, his family and the Fundació Antoni Tàpies. A point of view that doesn’t set out to establish categories for the works so much as to exhibit them and reveal their tensions, contradictions and paradoxes.

The first exhibition presented by the Museu Nacional following elimination of the 1940 cut-off date for its narrative is a retrospective of an artist who is central to the whole of the second half of the 20th century. For Antoni Tàpies, the Museu Nacional was an essential point on his vital itinerary, where he found the Romanesque roots to his work.

The exhibition at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies

Parallel to this, in the rooms of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, the visitor will find a selection centred on a series of works from between 1946 and 2009 that show Tàpies’s interest in poor materials and in objects: from the use of cardboard, threads and rope in the early works to assemblage and the incorporation of the object on the surface of the canvas. This becomes more evident after the late 1960s and the artist resumes them energetically in the 1990s. From straw, the baker’s tray, newspaper to a broken plate, sheets, blankets, doors and windows, Tàpies makes use of these materials and objects taken from his immediate surroundings and makes them central features in his works. The selection showcases Tàpies’s wish to magnify what is considered small and insignificant to show that everything that is considered marginal can suggest essential ideas. To accompany the exhibition Tàpies. From the Inside, a documentary called Tàpies will be shown in the auditorium. Made by Clovis Prévost and produced by Maeght, with music by Carles Santos and the collaboration of Joan Brossa, the film shows how the work *Painting with Graphics* (1969) was produced, at the same time as it contextualises it with images of the studio in Barcelona and in Campins.
Laurence Rassel and Pepe Serra

When the Fundació Antoni Tàpies invited Vicente Todolí to curate a retrospective exhibition of the work of Antoni Tàpies, he imposed two conditions. One was to have the time and freedom to select the works, and the other to see them all. See them all? To see all the works of Antoni Tàpies is impossible. His is an immense oeuvre that spans several decades and various techniques and is scattered throughout many collections, both public and private. The idea was to see all of it before deciding if it was possible to propound a vision that was distinct from previous retrospectives, the proviso being to see everything the artist had kept back, recovered and archived of his output for himself, for his family and for the Fundació Antoni Tàpies that he founded in 1984. In short order, given the complexity of Antoni Tàpies' oeuvre and of the amplitude of Todolí's choice of works for the exhibition, entitled Tàpies: From Within, it became clear that it would exceed the exhibition space of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies. So as to give the necessary space for the exhibition to unfold in all its potential, the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) was invited to participate in the project. Such a joint venture between a centre of modern and contemporary art like the Fundació Antoni Tàpies and the MNAC, whose collections and activities extend from the Romanesque to the middle of the twentieth century, can be understand in terms of the writings and the experience of the artist. In fact, in a paragraph of his Memòria personal (A Personal Memoir) Antoni Tàpies speaks of his first works and cites Munch, Picasso and Van Gogh, and even Catalan Romanesque, and says: 'My drawings were almost always figures, many pseudo-self-portraits, which I often set against a kind of sun or focus, as if the whole universe radiated from my head, from a point between my eyes. My few oils make even clearer this vision of an axial character, centrally placed, facing the spectator, or turned around, with symmetrical postures, as one in prayer; they show the influence of Catalan Romanesque art. In general, molecular rays from the periphery appear to form the central figure and converge in his head, or come out of it, and give life to his surroundings.'

When making his selection, Vicente Todolí’s angle of entry emphasises the freedom offered by taking spaces like the studio, the artist’s home and the Fundació to be conditioning factors and strictures. Close-at-hand, intimate places, defined by choice and the lack of choice, where the artist’s works and different eras accumulate. Todolí does not try to establish an order in the oeuvre or to categorise the studio work, but to give room to its paradoxes, its castoffs, its contradictions and surprises. What he saw
They often ignored the visual possibilities of the painting medium. Nevertheless, the influence of Surrealism cannot be reduced to ‘literary anecdotes’, and persists in, among other areas, the struggle against academicism in automatic writing, for instance.

The trajectory proposed by Todoli begins with a few early works from 1945 and 1946 that display influences to do with Dada or relating to art brut. Moreover, these pictures, which announce his later work with materials and objects, have a Symbolist character typical of the importance this movement gave to myth, allegory and metaphor. Symbolism was very present through the Modernista (Art Nouveau) aesthetic in late-nineteenth-century architecture in Barcelona.

The variety of motifs seen in Tàpies’ work in the early exploratory years was to be obsessively repeated all through his career. In particular, certain objects and body parts will be present in the different techniques developed in the evolution of this. They form part of successive spiritual and pictorial phases: from the magic and the mystery of human or dreamlike apparitions to a materic presence that come to the fore in the 1950s. It is then that the experimentation with materials will reach its highest pitch in the accumulation of elements and rough surfaces — earth, marble dust, hair, whiting, wire and paper — before arriving at the inimitable texture of the ‘walls’: walls for contemplation, for lamentation, subject to time, the body and the passions. From the 1950s to the seventies, the selection of works in Tàpies: From Within focuses on two lines of enquiry that Tàpies himself underlines in an other section of Memòria personal: on the one hand, wall-type compositions; on the other, the detritus of everyday life. In this there is neither opposition nor division, merely the fact that Tàpies creates one facet alongside the other, moves from one to the other. Both facets call to contemplation, destruction, love, pain, ruination, unity and separation. The choice of works for the exhibition Tàpies: From Within keeps to these narrative guidelines by integrating, from the first, a few examples of works from the 1950s that are closer to lyrical, poetic abstraction, before delving directly into matter itself, into material substance. Instead of being the representation of an idea, a projection of themselves, the materials and the objects turn into a presence, a reality of themselves. Tàpies transposes the insignificant, converts the everyday into art, the art in the everyday. All is material in Tàpies. In his essay for this catalogue, Barry Schwabsky points out that ‘Painting here is not a transcendence of its materials but their manifestation; and of course the support — canvas or whatever else it may be — that receives these stains, this dirt, this muck, is one more material among the others, and it is not superseded by their accumulation but defaced by them.’ The stretcher is both support and material, the canvas is folded over, sewn. Matter becomes the object on which traces, marks of the weight of a human body, are inscribed. Matter takes the form of a bed, a chair, a foot, and in turn the table is a stretcher, while a pair of trousers becomes matter.

From the first glued wires, by way of the work Porta metàl·lica i violí (Metal Shutter and Violin) (1956), Tàpies has regularly stuck, sawn, boxed in and turned objects round, moved them from one sphere of reading to another. Their state he has changed by sometimes giving them another name and, to be sure, another place. For a chair, a paintbrush, an overcoat or a knife can enter and find their place in an art gallery. If the objects and materials are transformed, they’re also what they are. Their consistency and their atoms are important. Aware as he is of their insignificance and their grandeur, the artist will work to transform them into objects of power. In his writings and in the choice of the objects that surround him in his daily life Antoni Tàpies allies himself with the genealogy of the object that contains a ‘payload’ projected by the artisan in the actual material. When describing a children’s game in his essay ‘El joc de saber mirar’ (The Game of Knowing How to Look), Tàpies suggests looking at a chair, especially a dilapidated chair, and imagining all the possible experiences the chair might have had. Starting with the wood it’s made of, including the industry and work that went into making it, the body and the feelings it’s borne the weight of. A chair is a chair, but it’s also a sign. Of uprightness, of reversal; it’s a medium, a way of crossing frontiers between here and there, in another time than this one.

The object isn’t chosen for its function within the industry but for its place within the whole. The object as posited by John Cage is owner of a version of Pila de plats (Pile of Plates), a Tàpies from 1970) is a process. Unlike Cage, Tàpies doesn’t establish an object’s sound — he integrates it as it is, he situates it at the same level as the noise. The canvas as musical score? The canvas as respiration. These works, in which objects are incursted, are like a buccal cavity, given that as we breathe the exterior world enters the interior world, and vice versa. A world of the exterior that adheres, is connected, and frequently penetrates and perforates the fabric. The world of the 1970s is immersed in the death throes of Francoisism, in memories of the bundles carried by displaced persons, the numbers of prisoners, the barbed-wire fences of frontiers, but for the artist that world is also defined by his family surroundings and the tools in his studio. No
representation, no reproduction is involved; the objects and materials are simply there, as they are, due to their impact on the retina but also to their impact on social relations, to do with their production of meaning, of linkage, of value. A complex reality.

Todolí’s selection coalesces in works from the 1970s that literally integrate objects; following that, the curator emphasises his interest in the assemblages of the 1980s and nineties in which Tàpies incorporates doors, palettes, window-frames and bedsteads; the everyday environment provides the raw material, reaching monumental size. Materials like sheet metal and foam make their appearance. The work as a whole bears the mark of the vocabulary developed by Tàpies: letters, mathematical symbols, numbers, eyelids and mouths. The ‘mystical’ correspondences, chiefly in relation to Buddhism, get stronger in many of the works chosen here: Jhana (1992) (a Buddhist form of meditation), Dharma (1995) (one of the Buddha’s three bodies), Dukkha (1995) (a Buddhist term to do with suffering), Atman (1996) (in Buddhism it literally means the ‘essential self,’ ‘ego’), and so forth.

In a conversation with Todolí, he stated his interest in devoting a large part of the exhibition to Tàpies’ dedication to thinking of the art object as a vehicle of the rapport with mystery, the forces of the universe and nature. And he insists on ‘magma works’ like Montseny-Montnegre and Díptic amb dues formes corbes (Díptic with Two Curved Shapes) (1988). ‘It is essential to bear in mind that the world of the mystics, like that of modern physics, cannot always be “explained” in normal words, but often “shows” itself the better through visual images’, writes Tàpies in his 1990 speech like that of modern physics, cannot always be “explained” in normal words, but of-}

The works presented here from the artist’s final years hint at an extreme poverty of means and at the simplicity and transparency of the urgent praxis of the artist. Todolí sets aside the Tàpies works from the same years that function as violent, tender or pornographic ex-votos in the shape of a body, the work as body in which the vitality of Tàpies’ matter could be fully perceived. His selection insists, radically, on the ‘crude-ness’ of the artist’s practice. The support, the wood panel, is left naked. The media and the objects are few; the matter, transparent: a few sheets of newspaper are seen, a pair of slippers, a door, some traces of black paint. From Medit-missa (Medium-message) (1999) to Homenatge a la matèria (Tribute to Matter) (2006), Tàpies deploys his item-ised grammar — varnish, clothing, earth, a stretcher, a blanket, an overcoat, a pallet — redolent with fragile but also bold signs, with the visual language of their maker. The works do not explain themselves — they show themselves, regard one another. In order to see the work of Tàpies we must use what is there, what we see and what we know, what we experience, what we feel. They call for active contemplation, as the quote from Ferrater Mora reminds us, a quote used by Tàpies as the epigram for ‘L’art modern, la mística i l’humor’: ‘In actual fact, contemplation is not a form of inactivity but an exercise.’

The choice of works proposed by Todolí forms a trajectory beginning with the rays of light radiating from the human figure in the early pictures and ending in the final works, and includes a cycle of signs, materials and objects that devour the whole, and reject it; the works may be of metal, wood, varnish and finally, in the late years, attain an extreme radicalism as far as media are concerned. From dust we return to dust, cosmic or earthly; we are at one with the artist in that respect: ‘The highest wisdom incarnated in the poorest body. And even in straw mixed with manure: the final sub- stances in which, by a rare miracle, the origin and strength of life emerge anew. The circle closes.’ Life and death received with serenity and with rage. The final work is insupportable due to its symptomatic violence and indigence in the face of what will occur, occur to us — the demise of the artist becomes insupportable in the vitality of these final gestures.

The models and rules Tàpies imposes upon himself call for a critical awareness of his own role. As dependent on gaining recognition as he is remote from rules and regulations, and rejecting assimilation of any kind, the artist generates an unclassifiable oeuvre by conjoining recurrent objects, materials, forms, texts and references. For their first incursions in the work of the artist, based on the choice proposed by Todolí, Dawn Ades and Barry Schwabsky suggest nuanced readings of the different intensities and tensions in Tàpies’ oeuvre.

Dawn Ades’s essay vaunts the influence of Dada and the violence of the poems of Jean Arp. How can the radicalism of Triptic (Triptych) of 1948 coexist with that of Capsa de cordills (Box of Strings) of 1946? A constantly renewed affirmation of freedom is in play here, a series of questions about human beings, a sensation of the absurdity of humanity and the influence of chance, for example, and the use of any material whatsoever to make objects. For Tàpies, the embrace of the irrational and of chance is interlaced with philosophical meditations on the nature of man, not infrequently treated with satire and humour; art and anti-art jostle together, traditions are broken and systems of knowledge scrutinised and challenged. Such observations might also be applied to Tàpies’s works of the final years.

Meanwhile, in his essay ‘Matter in the Form of a Foot: Tàpies as Anti-Abstractionist’ Barry Schwabsky delves into Tàpies’ matteric high point from the 1950s and 60s on,
'while it is correct to see Tàpies as a materialist, it would be wrong to believe that because he works with materials and eschews conventional representation he is therefore essentially an abstractionist. His materialism equally embraces the lacerated and erratic chirography of the graffitist’s elemental figurative imagery. ’Next, Schwabsky approaches the work of Tàpies in terms of the destruction and reconstruction of the human figure in the face of the absurdity of humanism after two world wars, and which re-emerged in Tàpies’s work in order to contest the purity and finality of what is definable as abstraction. ’Tàpies’, Schwabsky concludes, ‘rightly saw as materialism whatever would bring us back to earth.’ The idea of dust to dust emerges anew in the origin and strength of life, the circle is closed.

The circle is closed. It is here that we wish to briefly allude to the Tàpies style. Style can be a rhythm, can be a place. Just call to mind the images of Tàpies in the documentary Alfabet Tàpies (Tàpies Alphabet) walking around the canvas on the floor, marking the rhythm with a snapping of the fingers, or see the photo in this catalogue of the studio, a topological accumulation of works from different eras that pile up and jostle each other. That same space in which the choosing of the works was performed: a studio, an incubator, a sort of biological ‘culture’, as Todoli said as he was wandering through the artist’s workplace. A laboratory with its detritus and its inventions, a ritual, a space that keeps to the specific rules imposed by the artist, at once remote from and immersed in the world: ‘Whatever its sophistication, style has always something crude about it: it is a form with no clear destination, the product of a thrust, not an intention, and, as it were, a vertical and lonely dimension of thought. Its frame of reference is biological or biographical, not historical: it is the writer’s “thing”, his glory and his prison, it is his solitude. Indifferent to society and transparent to it, a closed personal process, it is in no way the product of a choice or of a reflection on Literature. It is the private portion of the ritual, it rises up from the writer’s myth-laden depths and unfolds beyond his area of control.’ A work emerging from the depths, a place of germination at the intersection of flesh and world, if we follow the definition of style proposed by Roland Barthes.

The artist created his work in a continual tension directed towards a purity he was not seeking by reaffirming his attention and attraction for poor, vulgar materials, and with a humility that cannot be expressed by means of abstraction, but with an intention, and a concentration that showed a preference for rupture and perturbation, followed by a return to calmness. These densities, these contractions and these tensions are visible in the choice of works presented here — and the job in hand is not to resolve them but to exhibit them.
We adopt W. J. T. Mitchell's definition: ‘(...) reality that is constructed out of the Symbolic and the Imaginary...’—that is, out of words and images, the sayable and the seeable, discourse and concrete things...’ W. J. T. Mitchell, Seeing Through Rose, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012.

6. See, herein, the Antoni Tàpies essay ‘Matter in the Form of a Foot: Tàpies as Anti-Abstrac- tionist’.

7. ‘Take a look at the simplest of objects. Let’s take, for example, an old chair. It seems like nothing. But think of the universe comprised within it: the sweaty hands cutting the wood that used to be a robust tree, full of energy; in the middle of a luxuriant forest by some high mountains. The living work that built it, the joyful anticipation of the one who bought it, the tired bodies it endured, whether in fancy halls or in a humble dining room in your neighbourhood. Everything, everything shares life and has its importance! For the Birds: John Cage In Conver- sation with Daniel Charles, London/New York: Marion Boyars, 1981.

8. See, herein, the Barry Schwabsky essay, ‘Matter – and the Imaginary, that is, out of words and images, the sayable and the seeable, discourse and concrete things...’ W. J. T. Mitchell, Seeing

9. ‘There is one term of the problem which you are not taking into account: precisely, the world. The real. You say: the real, the world as it is. But it is not, it becomes! It moves, it changes! It doesn’t wait for us to change... It is more mobile than you can imagine. You are getting closer to this reality when you say as if “presents itself”; that means that it is not there, existing as an object. The world, the real is not an object. It is a process.’ John Cage, For the Birds: John Cage In Conser- vation with Daniel Charles, London/New York: Marion Boyars, 1981.


12. ibid.

13. See the works Home (Man, 1945) and Zoom (1946), pages 22 and 40.

14. Text translated from Catalan: ‘La saviesa màxima s’encarna en el cos més noble. I fins i tot en la palla barrejada amb els fems: les matèries finals on, per rat miracle, sURT de nou l’origen i la força


18. ibid.

19. See the works Home (Man, 1945) and Zoom (1946), pages 22 and 40.

20. Text translated from Catalan: ‘La saviesa màxima s’encarna en el cos més noble. I fins i tot en la palla barrejada amb els fems: les matèries finals on, per rat miracle, sURT de nou l’origen i la força


Antoni Tàpies' Essays

A Report on the Wall

The long night
the sound of water
tells what I think.
Gotxiku

Whenever I am asked for an explanation about what people call my walls, windows or doors, I try to make clear right away that, in fact, I have made fewer walls, windows and doors than they suppose. My response can be interpreted in a double sense. Firstly as a protest or an invitation for my walls, windows or doors — which may well be within my pictures — to be taken as a fundamentally artistic organisation. Secondly, as a warning that, as far as my intentions go, these images, as most works of art, have never been an end in and of themselves, they should rather be viewed as a springboard, as means to reach further ends. But the wall, the window or the door — and so many other images that parade in my canvases — are indeed there and I am far from trying to hide the fact. With this I mean that I do not think that images, in my works, should be considered as indifferent excuses to prop visual elements, as the 'subject-matters' were said to be for Impressionists and Fauves; from those 'subject-matters', it is further said, the ensuing abstractionists or informalists liberated themselves. My walls, windows or doors — or at least my suggestions of them — do not avoid their responsibility and hold their full archetypal or symbolic weight.

Is this a return to ‘subject-matter’? Again my answer must be ambiguous. We know today that in the structure of communication in art things at times are and are not there, magically appear and disappear, move in and out, intertwine, release associations... Everything is possible! Everything takes place in an infinitely greater field than what is framed by the size of the picture or by what is materially in the picture. This matter is but a support inviting the viewer to participate in the much larger game of a thousand and one visions and feelings; it is the talisman lifting or sinking walls into the deepest recesses of our spirit, opening and at times closing windows in the construction of our impotence, our bondage, or our freedom. The ‘subject-matter’ then may be found in the picture or it may exist solely inside the spectator’s head.

It would take me very far back to tell the story of how I developed my consciousness of the evocative power of mural imagery. These are memories of my adolescence and early youth when I lived enclosed within four walls during the time of war. The suffering of the adults and all the cruel imaginings of my age, abandoned to its own impulses amid all the surrounding catastrophes, were drawn and etched all around me. All the walls of a city, which, by family tradition, seemed so mine, witnessed the martyrdom and the inhumane repression inflicted on our people.

Cultural memories stressed its urgency. All the archaeological information I have absorbed, the advice of Leonardo da Vinci, the destruction brought about by Dada, the photographs of Brassai, all contributed, unsurprisingly, to the fact that my first works of 1945 had something to do with street graffiti and a universe of repressed protest, clandestine yet full of life, as one could find on the walls of my country.

Later came ‘the hour of solitude’. Inside my tiny bedroom-studio, I began my forty days in the desert; I do not know if they are over yet. With a desperate, feverish rage I took formal experimentation to maniacal levels. Each canvas was a battlefield where wounds multiplied ad infinitum. And then came the surprise. All that frenetic movement, all that gesticulation, all that unending dynamism, by dint of the scratch-es, blows, scars, divisions and subdivisions that I inflicted upon every millimeter, upon every hundredth of every millimeter, suddenly took a qualitative leap. My eye no longer perceived differences. Everything congealed in a uniform mass. What had been ardent ebullition transformed itself into static silence. It was like a great lesson in humility for the pride of my unbridled quest.

One day I attempted to reach silence directly, with greater resignation, surrendering to the fate that governs any profound struggle. My millions of furious clawings became millions of grains of dust, of sand... A new landscape, as in the story Through...
**The Looking Glass**, opened before me to reveal the most secret intimacy of things. A new geo-graphy lit my way, carrying me from surprise to surprise: suggestions of unusual combinations and molecular structures, of atomic phenomena, of the world of galaxies or of images in a microscope. The symbolism of dust — to be one with dust, here lies the profound identity, that is, the inner profundity between man and nature (Tao Te Ching) —, of ashes, of the earth from whence we come and to which we return, of the solidarity born when we realise that the differences among ourselves are like those between one grain of sand and the next. The most sensational surprise was the sudden discovery, one day, that my pictures, for the first time in history, had become walls.

By means of what strange process had I arrived at such precise images? And why did they make me, their first viewer, quake with emotion? Evidently nothing comes out of nothing and there must be an explanation for it all. Was it the culmination of a process of fatigue brought about by the proliferation of an easy tachism in the world? A reaction to escape anarchic informalism? An attempt to flee abstract excess and the urge for something more concrete? Did I see the possibility to reach even more primordial levels, the most extremely pure elements, the most essential elements of painting that the masters from the preceding generation had stimulated me to seek? Perhaps another artist would not have perceived all this, or it would have had a more or less transitory effect. But how could this fail to brand me? A strange destiny, that of my surname. It was as if the strange omen that years before I heard from an occultist had found me, unavoidable for the capture of its messages, are the necessary episode of art's history, had become walls.

Notes


2. This text was commissioned in 1969 by the journal *Essais* for an issue devoted to the idea of the wall as a form of expression in contemporary art.

3. A tàpia, plural tàpies, is a kind of wall, normally an exterior wall that stands alone, as enclosing a yard. Tàpies tend to be pockmarked and less well maintained than house walls. TN.
Nothing is Paltry | Antoni Tàpies

...for to be born again you need to die.
Joan Salvat-Papasseit

Some accursed questions are often asked: What does this represent? What did you mean to do with those stains? Do you believe that with these lines or these materials people will understand your ideas?

We tend not to answer because, to begin with, we feel it impossible to express in just a few words — to say nothing of the difficulty of finding the precise words — things we have been mulling over for years. It’s like Mallarmé’s reply to the young lady who had not understood him after making the ‘effort’ of spending a few hours reading his poems. Besides, we also think: it’s not my job, art critics and writers can do that. But the insistence of so many people of good intentions spurs us to attempting some answers.

Yet such difficulties do not make the task impossible. Some writers have produced quite interesting analyses on the meaning my works. I have not always agreed with all of those, only in part.

Everything may be analysed, even the most abstract of works. Just think, for example, that whole books have been written on Beethoven’s quartets. But you will notice how often you have to discuss that music by relating some passages to others, movements with those preceding or following them, a given opus with another, or even the whole of Beethoven’s work with that of Haydn or Mozart. Emotions are transmitted by the work itself, because a work is related to many others, by the same artist or by other artists. To explain one work is almost like explaining the whole history of the art of our time.

Yet I will make an effort, as I have in mind those who have requested this so often. And I want to insist that it is fine if we end up where we started because the whole thing is of relative importance. Furthermore, it is likely that the difficulties of the analysis grow and we may reach a point where we no longer know which work we are discussing. Because, above all, if you do not accept the ‘game’ with the proper disposition, no explanation will be worth a jot, and we will not have a good time.

The latter is really the first and most decisive step for analysis. It is like the precondition necessary to attend a magic or prestidigitation show. As Olivier Lacombe says, the image of the magician’s prestiges is most appropriate to explain the ‘powers’ of the artist, as it also contains the element of presence and ambiguity between the real and the unreal. If you do not allow yourself to be lured by those prestiges that make up the convention we call art, you might as well give up.

Consider what happens to the spectator who walks into the theatre for a magic show with the sole fixation of uncovering the trick. The more tricks he notices, the duller the spectacle, because in reality the show is nothing: pure deception that pleases only the innocent who fall for it. This is precisely its beauty. And what beauty! What poetry! The ceremony, the movements, the colours, the essential purity of telling us that things now are and now are not, that animals and objects are transformed and remain themselves, that they multiply, vanish, grow larger or smaller. That fish become birds, that the emptiness of a trunk becomes a young princess, that the breeze from a fan makes flowers grow or that money appears from the nose of the most suspicious.

You see right away what I mentioned: the need to explain that it is precisely because of the fury of the German Dance that precedes it that the arioso dolente stirs us, and that the shadowy middle leads us to the light of the finale. The whole thing becomes curiously clear without, it seems, any concrete mention of a number of elements: from the violin’s lament under the oppression of the cello to the latent heartbeat of the choir over the continuo; from the feminine sighs and cadences of the second violin, with its echoes, to the appoggiaturas and long-drawn out and subtle harmonies, etc. To be sure we are always left in doubt whether the explanation is good because we have already heard the quartet, or whether the quartet is understood better because we have read the explanation. But the matter is that nothing is impossible and if you press us — even if it is just to please our Cuban friend the avant-garde and revolutionary poet Carlos Franqui, who says that you should always drop a hint for your audience — we will be able to say something about one of our works, much as we believe such commentary is dangerous and we will be left with the sensation that we are skipping what’s most important.

I would have never predicted that intelligent commentary could be made about something as airy and impalpable as — to stay with the master from Bonn — the famous cavatina of his Quartet in B Flat Major. But such commentary exists and is very good.
People from the Far East know a lot about this, as about so many things. The Japanese, for example, know full well that the art object must be surrounded by a certain ceremony and a certain reverential mystery to be able to accomplish its mission. For this reason they keep their art hidden and bring it out only when we are ready to lend it all the necessary importance. Then a wooden box appears, admirable in its simplicity, and worthy of contemplation. From it you extract a package of a delicate material folded and tied with exquisite art. The mystery and expectation grow as you admire each development. You feel the emotion of seeing, as if for the first time, the pure existence of things. Another unwrapping. And after the long suspense, before our eyes appears all the beauty of a fragile ceramic piece, ravishing despite its simplicity. It is a whole cosmos, the entire universe become presence, and you must place it sacrcely upon an altar, away from all else. You need to sit before it with devotion: it requires meditation, you must discover, bit by bit, all the intimacy, grandeur, feelings and ideals that the author has put into it. Its ephemeral fragility is also important — as is the paper or the silk of all Oriental paintings, or the art of flower arrangement —, a stimu-
sus to care and vigilant attention, to loving things in their mortality, to understanding that everything must irrevocably change.

Surely, it is because I also endure this love for fleeting things that I have always believed it absurd that all that stands for the opposite in Western art: abundance or serial manufacture, materials that are too solid or too technical. And perhaps it is because I also believe in the ‘ritual’ of contemplation — of knowing how to read — that I find the notion of taking art to the streets equally odd, as it makes art lose its nature as a conventional game, which is one of its fundamental recourses.

For a scientific mind, for technology and abundance, for the hoarding mentality and the enslaving hurriedness of the two-and-two-makes-four Westerner, this must be hard to believe: that in a bit of clay you can see the whole universe.

To begin with, we no longer have the time nor knowledge to see things. Our senses slide over the excess of preoccupations, of colours, of dazzle and noise that forever surrounds us. We must conquer and relearn the most primordial: to be able and to be willing to care for things. To know how to concentrate on what we do, how to have time for contemplation, how to enjoy a modicum of decency and freedom in our lives, and the sufficient hours of rest to practice all this. We still do not have that chamber the Japanese call tokonoma, wherein they single out and give importance to art objects for which their sensitivity has been educated since time immemorial. True, for all our Western ordinariness and awkwardness as hurried contemplators, many of us learn intuitively to reach that receptive state necessary for us to take in the shock and the chain of associations that constitute the artistic emotion. But what in the Orient is — or has been — relatively common, here is accessible only to a few privileged people.

Let us suppose that, as a first step, we can enter an exhibition hall or a museum having these previous conditions fairly developed. Otherwise, we would not need to go any farther. Let us then look at a given work of mine, for my readers must be eager to know how I will do. Let’s take a ‘difficult’ one for a good challenge. A work that has been argued about, of which someone told me that, even though he was an admirer of my art, he could see nothing in it. It is a work done with vegetable hair, the kind of very curly straw filaments used in upholstery or to make mattresses. Its title is Palla i fusta (Straw and Wood).

Let my readers not be discouraged by my saying that things are better understood when we can relate them to others, for we cannot forget that each work has its special sound, something that makes it different from others. I insist on this because we must bear in mind that I will speak about a particular work and therefore about a part of all I have done in my working life. But the matter is still difficult because I have done a number of pictures with straw and, as they complement each other, they would make this explanation clearer; I, myself, in my attempt to single out what may fall into generalisation, as I have them all in mind.

I imagine that the greatest surprise for viewers who enter unprepared must be precisely finding this mat of straw in an exhibition hall where, until that moment, they were used to seeing more ‘important’ things. If the viewer has lent us the trust of the ‘magical prestiges’ he will clearly see that the artist has attempted to make art — this is not a bale of straw in a field, but straw fitted into the shape of a picture in a venue where art is normally shown — with a most humble material. The first clue, then, is that the ‘magician’ — the artist, in this case —, the specialist in the profound things of life, as tradition would have it, one who used to be regarded as inspired by the gods, is today choosing this primordial poverty that is straw as a theme worthy of consideration. At other times I have chosen dirt, mud, emptiness, a hole, damage by fire, a piece of cardboard, a wall, garbage, newsprint, a patisserie tray, windswept objects, human prints, bed sheets, a broken plate, knots, traces of rain, footprints, hide, hair, iron grates, cracks, thread, debris, pillows, army-issue blankets, rice and hundreds of other things. Today is the straw’s turn.

What happens, then? The old favorites of the Muses no longer paint celestial things? They, who had always treated great solemnities, no longer glorify their lords or any-one who thinks he’s in their graces? It turns out they don’t. The artists, who consider
themselves the most refined of beings, the most sensitive, have long since stopped believing in all this. Neither gods nor lords. No one is important enough for them and they would like society to think the same way. On the other hand, they fall in love with straw. So the spectators’ right to imagination can enter into play.

We have all seen residues of straw in a stable. But by finding them here, in the venue of ‘important’ things, who knows if out of archetypal mechanisms, those residues — tapping on what is known as the ‘collective unconscious’ — will make those old solar myths, which happen to always have been born in the straw of a stable, echo in our spirit. The spark of the Veda that spews from the sun and brings fire to earth thanks to straw and the ox’s and the donkey’s breath that will conserve it. The greatest wisdom is incarnated in the poorest of bodies. And even in straw mixed with manure: the final matter where, oh miracle, the origin and force of life surges. The circle comes to a close. To reflect on straw, on manure, may have some importance today. It is to meditate on prime matter, on what is most natural, in the origin of force and of life. For this reason we need to remember that the world is full of straw mattresses and that an artist is more interested in those than in the beds of the gods or their ministers or the rich who adore them. Because an artist believes that this origin, the source of life, the fertilizer feeding the soil, the ‘salt of the earth’, can really be found — I am saying nothing new — in those who fight from below, those who sleep on straw, literally or symbolically, in wretched huts, or in the cots of so many prisons or amid the manure stench of the stables for ‘heretics’ and the fields where those considered refuse spill their sweat. And all this not out of sentimentality or any ‘arty’ taste for indigence, but rather to understand and explain the ‘primordial naturality’ of dialectics and the struggle of all things, including, if you recall, the class struggle. Because the picture I am describing has a piece of wood dividing it in two. Two. Those who understand symbolism as applied to art — even though, prudently, they never seem to derive from this any practical consequence — would tell us, to be sure, more than I can about this two: opposition, conflict, reflection, equilibrium (or its lack), creator and created, black and white, male and female, yin and yang, life and death, good and evil, high and low. In this picture there is clearly a division forming the upper and the lower spaces. They are two blank spaces. Blank, white. The colour of origin and of end, the colour of one who is about to change condition, the colour of absolute silence. Kandinsky said that white is not the colour of death, but the preparation for all living possibilities, for all youthful joys. Two white spaces with straw swirls that appear to want to leap from one side to the other. Two gigantic and young manes that intertwine, two pubic areas touching. The mane, tremendously entwined, accentuates this sensation of movement, of expansion, a veritable tempestuous cloud of nerves clashing or striking one another, the world of upstairs against the world of downstairs, and vice-versa.

All right: this is all so relative! There will always be someone to say: ‘Wow, this guy’s over the top! It is nothing but a bunch of hair stuck to a white canvas that has an ordinary slit of wood in the middle!’ And we will have to admit he’s right. He has seen through our trick. In fact the whole spectacle is nothing, unless we want or are able to see in it more than is there. But the artist feels no frustration at this, the prestidigitator feels failed, or the magician ridiculed. Why — we ask — is this positivistic spectator the one who sees clearly? What right does this person have not to allow others to ‘imagine’ freely? Because there are indeed others, beginning with the author himself, who facing the voluptuous billows of straw divided in two, keep seeing in them things upon things, and they climb higher and higher. And they say, yes sir, in the world everything is twisted like the mane, that is also a sign of nobility, or of the old scouring pads of charwomen, and everything is also split into two: light and shadow, earth and heaven, positive and negative. Dualism and complementariness as in all cosmic processes, as thesis and antithesis fused into synthesis, or in the embrace of two lovers. In what is primordial, in the most simple, in straw, and even in manure and in death itself, whether we like it not, lies the power for a new fount of life. To show this is essential. From the antagonic battle of nerves something new is born. It is the sexual act, the revolt, the offspring...

But as we turn back our ears we can still hear a shout: ‘Words, fantasies of an important magician! No one will see as much philosophy there! This is an art of pretension and vanity!’ And the truth is that the author must confess, once again, that they are right, and that he thinks the same. And in reality it might be because of this, precisely, because of his prevention against vanity, that he decided to make a picture with straw. Because he believes that nothing may be glorified today, outside of the most elemental, the most pure, the least contaminated and even the most innocent... on condition, of course, that it always be ready to ignite and receive the spark of golden fire we have mentioned. Because he sees that only this keeps the world alive. That this is life. And he will have nothing else to do with hierarchies and disguises worn by those who believe themselves important and who are dead. For a painter there is only a bunch of straw and a two. And this is a two that is a one. And everyone has the right to tell him, if they want to, that he is a charlatan, that this is all false, a deceit. Because he thinks so too. A picture is nothing. It is a door leading to another door. In fact the whole spectacle is nothing, unless we want or are able to see in it more than is there. But the artist feels no frustration at this, the prestidigitator feels failed, or the magician ridiculed. Why — we ask — is this positivistic spectator the one who sees clearly? What right does this person have not to allow others to ‘imagine’ freely? Because there are indeed others, beginning with the author himself, who facing the voluptuous billows of straw divided in two, keep seeing in them things upon things, and they climb higher and higher. And they say, yes sir, in the world everything is twisted like the mane, that is also a sign of nobility, or of the old scouring pads of charwomen, and everything is also split into two: light and shadow, earth and heaven, positive and negative. Dualism and complementariness as in all cosmic processes, as thesis and antithesis fused into synthesis, or in the embrace of two lovers. In what is primordial, in the most simple, in straw, and even in manure and in death itself, whether we like it not, lies the power for a new fount of life. To show this is essential. From the antagonic battle of nerves something new is born. It is the sexual act, the revolt, the offspring...
And then one thinks it is best to turn one’s back on everything and sit on a chair, as one day my companion had done in a dream. A chair floating in the white of infinite space. And suddenly she looked to the ground and felt an intense and sublime emotion that made her weep as she saw pieces of things strewn all about, small nothings, sparse remnants, bits of straw...

It is only by the light of this inner whiteness that appears to surge in order to tell us what we really are that I feel I might again find the necessary strength to rediscover the beauty we felt was definitely lost in the world: the soil watered by our poet friend, the kiss that effects the change from child to woman, the wall mirror that, in the best of all possible pretenses, reflects inside us the same light, now transformed, of the ever-turning world.

But we will again hear the yells of those shouting: ‘And supposing all this folly is true, what can those people you profess to love so much get from this? What about Justice? What about Freedom?’ And one cannot but admit that this is all very important. And one will recall, and repeat a thousand times, the words Paul Klee wrote his friend Franz Marc, who was fighting in the front during the First World War, pointing out that for Klee small, banal things were greater than heroic acts: ‘A warrior in a campaign might find it difficult to understand that I am making small watercolors and playing the violin. And to think that this seems so important to me! And in a general way, the I! And Romanticism!’ In another letter Klee clarified, using an absurdity of course, that the ‘I’ meant the ‘divine’ I, the ‘universal centre’.

No one in the world of art and poetry believes any longer in gods. But, willy-nilly, in their destinies, ‘those vortices’, as Manuel Sacristán puts it, ‘mixing the business of Orpheus with that of Prometheus’ remain.3 These are the business of the seducer and its spells; of the nature of the always-failed pursuer of ideals, unreachable unless one renounces everything; and the business of the god of revolt; of the will of the intellect that will always end up choosing the earth over the vagaries of the spirit.

But let me insist that I have never disguised anything. We have always said that the question seemed most important to us. But we have also said at the beginning that this matter is not serious in the manner of those who think themselves wise. Because art is like a game, and only if we make ourselves innocent — and who knows whether this is not also true of all that is human — will we grasp its profound sense.

But in the conviction that this special innocence of the world of art and of poetry — let us say it once and for all — is nothing like as ‘gratuitous’ and inoffensive as the ‘learned ones’ believe. In reality it belongs to that mode of thinking propounded by the author of the Seven Manifestoes of Dada, in accordance with Marx’s study of archaic societies. Yes, according to Tristan Tzara, this way of thinking reproduces, on a more elevated plane, certain mythical formulas and spontaneous rituals of primitive thought, that is, non-direct thought, precisely with a view to the true liberation of the spirit and the accomplishment of the potential of human nature, which ‘a bad social and moral organisation — taken advantage of by a few — has systematically blocked’.

Notes
2. Written in February 1970.
Biographies

Antoni Tàpies

Antoni Tàpies (Barcelona, 1923–2012) created the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in 1984 in order to promote the expressions of Modernity from all times, and specially of contemporary art. His works, represented in the main public collections worldwide, have been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Dia: Beacon, New York; at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; at the Institute of Contemporary Art and the Serpentine Gallery, London; at the Kunsthhaus, Zurich; at the Musée d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume and the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; at the Museu Español de Arte Contemporáneo and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; at the Institut Valencià d’Art Modern, Valencia, and at the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona, among others.

In parallel with his artistic production, Tàpies wrote a number of texts compiled in a series of publications, some of which have been translated into several languages: La pràctica de l’art (The Practice of Art, 1970), L’art contra l’estètica (Art Against Aesthetics, 1974), Memòria personal. Fragment per a una autobiografia (A Personal Memoir. Fragments for an Autobiography, 1977), La realitat com a art (Reality as Art, 1982), Per un art modern i progressista (For a Modern and Progressive Art, 1985), Valor de l’art (The Value of Art, 1993) and L’art i els seus llocs (Art and its Places, 1999).

Vicente Todolí

Vicente Todolí’s career in the visual arts spans more than 20 years, and includes positions such as Chief Curator 1986-88 and then Artistic Director of IVAM (Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno) 1988-96, before joining the Museu Serralves as its founding Director in 1996. He was member of the jury and the Advisory Committee of the 1995 Carnegie International and he was an adviser for Future, Past, Present (curated by Germano Celant) at the 1997 Venice Biennale. From 2002 until 2007 he was on the Board of International Foundation Manifesta. He currently advises Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) in Barcelona, Museu Serralves in Porto, Merz Foundation in Torino, Botin Foundation in Santander, Kaldor Public Art Projects in Sidney among others. He is also a trustee of Parasol Unit in London and Dali Foundation in Figueres.

At IVAM he curated exhibitions of work by contemporary artists, such as John Baldessari, Richard Prince, Reiner Ruthenbeck, James Rosenquist, Richard Tuttle, Per Kirkeby, Tony Cragg, Juan Muñoz, Julião Sarmento, Guillermo Kuitca, Cildo Meireles and Pedro Cabrita Reis. At the Museu Serralves, he curated the museum’s inaugural exhibition, Circa1968, and exhibitions of James Lee Byars, Franz West, Gary Hill, Hamish Fulton, Lothar Baumgarten, Fischli and Weiss, Roni Horn, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Richard Hamilton/ Dieter Roth and Francis Bacon. He co-curated the Portuguese pavilion for the 2003 Venice Biennale. At Tate Modern he has curated exhibitions of Sigmar Polke, Robert Frank, Fischli & Weiss, and also co-curated Cildo Meireles, Rodehenko & Popova: Defining Constructivism and recently Van Doesburg and the International Avant-Garde.

He was born in Valencia, Spain in 1958. His background includes graduate studies in art history as a Fulbright Scholar at Yale University and City University of New York.

He was an ISP Fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1984-85. He is Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres and he received the Portuguese order Santiago da Espada in 2003 and Doctor Honoris Causa Universidad Politécnica de Valencia in Valencia in 2011.
List of works at Fundació Antoni Tàpies

Fils sobre cartó, 1946
(Hilos sobre cartón / Threads on Cardboard)
Collage and pintura sobre cartó / Collage and paint on cardboard
38 × 46 cm
Teresa Barba Fàbregas, Barcelona

Fils y argolla, 1946
(Hilos y argolla / Threads and Ring)
Pintura y collage sobre cartón / Paint and collage on cardboard
53 × 75 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Capsa de cordelles, 1946
(Caja de cordetes / Box of Strings)
Procediment mixt sobre cartó / Mixed media on cardboard
48 × 40 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Greco amb creu blanca, 1954
(Anumícolis con cruz blanca / Yellow with White Cross)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas
60 × 73 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Grafismes sobre vernis, 1955
(Grafismos sobre barniz / Graphic Signs on Varnish)
Vernis sobre tela / Varnish on canvas
73 × 92 cm
Toni Tàpies, Barcelona

Pintura-collage amb draps i flis, 1955
(Pintura-collage con trapos e hilos / Painting-Collage with Rags and Threads)
Pintura i collage sobre tela / Paint and collage on canvas
161,5 × 129,5 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Porta metàl·lica i vidre, 1956
(Puerta metálica y vidrio / Metal Shutter and Glass)
Pintura sobre objecte-assemblatge / Paint on object-assemblage
200 × 150 × 33 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Pintura sobre isorel i collage blanc, 1964
(Pintura sobre isorel y collage blanco / Paint on Masonite and White Collage)
Procediment mixt sobre isorel / Mixed media on masonite
118 × 170 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Arc blanc sobre fusta, 1967
(Arco blanco sobre madera / White Arc on Wood)
Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Mixed media on wood
170 × 195 cm
Miquel Tàpies, Barcelona

Matèria sobre mirall, 1964
(Materia sobre espejo / Matter on a Mirror)
Procediment mixt sobre mirall / Mixed media on mirror
Verd-blau palla, 1968
(Verde-azul pajá / Green-Blue Straw)
Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Mixed media on wood
89 × 126 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Bastidor cobert amb plàstic, 1968
(Bastidor cubierto con plástico / Frame Covered with Plastic)
Pintura i assemblatge sobre tela al retes / Paint and assemblage on inside-out canvas
46 × 55 cm
Clara Tàpies, Barcelona

Pallà i fusta, 1969
(Paja y madera / Straw and Wood)
Assemblage sobre tela / Assemblage on canvas
150 × 116 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Màteria en forma de peu, 1965
(Materia en forma de pie / Matter in the Form of a Foot)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas
148 × 114 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Màteria sobre tela, 1965
(Materia sobre tela / Matter on Canvas)
Pintura sobre objecte / Paint on object
Relleu amb cordes, 1965
(Relieve con cuerdas / Relief with Strings)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas
27 × 35 cm
Teresa Barba Fàbregas, Barcelona

Papers de diari amb signe, 1964
(Papeles de periódico con signo / Newspaper with Sign)
Pintura i collage sobre tela / Paint and collage on canvas
92 × 73 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Arc blanc sobre fusta, 1967
(Arco blanco sobre madera / White Arc on Wood)
Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Mixed media on wood
170 × 195 cm
Miquel Tàpies, Barcelona

Pintura sobre objecte, 1964
(Pintura sobre objeto / Paint on Object)
Assemblage sobre tela / Assemblage on canvas
190 × 116 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Roguers sobre vernis, 1965
(Rogueres sobre barniz / Rogueres on Varnish)
Vernis sobre tela / Varnish on canvas
73 × 92 cm
Toni Tàpies, Barcelona

Pintura-collage amb draps i flis, 1955
(Pintura-collage con trapos e hilos / Painting-Collage with Rags and Threads)
Pintura i collage sobre tela / Paint and collage on canvas
118 × 170 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Pintura sobre fusta, 1960
(Pintura sobre madera / Painting on Wood)
Pintura sobre fusta / Paint on canvas
51 × 99 × 6 cm
Antoni Tàpies y Familia, SA, Barcelona

Pintura sobre isorel i collage blanc, 1964
(Pintura sobre isorel y collage blanco / Paint on Masonite and White Collage)
Procediment mixt sobre isorel / Mixed media on masonite
116,5 × 62,5 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Fils i argolla, 1946
(Hilos y argolla / Threads and Ring)
Pintura i collage sobre cartó / Paint and collage on cardboard
38 × 46 cm
Teresa Barba Fàbregas, Barcelona

Tela encollada, 1961
(Glued Fabric)
Pintura sobre lona encollada sobre tela / Paint on sailcloth glued on canvas
195 × 170 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Silueta de tisores, 1963
(Silhouette of threads)
Procediment mixt sobre tela al retes / Mixed media on back-to-front canvas
147 × 118 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Cobert de plàstic, 1969
(Cubierto de plástico / Cover with Plastic)
Pintura i assemblatge sobre tela / Paint and assemblage on inside-out canvas
46 × 55 cm
Clara Tàpies, Barcelona

Catifa,

1970
(Allombras / Rug)
Pintura i collage sobre tela / Paint and collage on canvas
146 × 114 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Taula capsirada, 1970
(Mesa invertida / Upside Table)
Pintura i lliapis sobre objecte / Paint and pencil on object
215 × 181 × 40 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Cúfru i robu, 1970
(Silla y ropa / Chair and Clothes)
Objecte-assemblatge / Objecte-assemblage
94 × 76 × 69 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Pila de plats, 1970
(Pila de platos / Pile of Plates)
Objecte-assemblatge / Objecte-assemblage
40 × 23 × 23 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Farcell, 1970
(Hato / Bundle)
Pintura sobre objecte-assemblatge / Paint on object-assemblage
75 × 55 × 45 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Pantalons sobre bastidor, 1971
(Pantalones sobre bastidor / Trousers on Canvas)
List of works at Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya

Home, 1945
(Obrero / Sailor)
Oil on canvas 54.5 x 45 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Composición amb figures, 1945
(Composición con figuras / Composition with Figures)
Oil on canvas 45 x 54 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Toni Tàpies, Barcelona
62 x 51 cm
Procediment mixt sobre tela / (Personaje / Personage)
Barcelona 65 x 54 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Zoom, 1946
Oil on canvas 60 x 73 cm
Clara Tàpies, Barcelona

Figura sobre fusta cremada, 1947
(Figura sobre madera quemada / Figure on Burnt Wood)
Oil on canvas 101 x 48.5 cm
Teresa Barba Fàbregas, Barcelona

Gris N. XXXII, 1954
(Gris N. XXXII / Grey. No. XXXII)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 46 x 98 cm
Teresa Barba Fàbregas, Barcelona

Tres taques sobre espai gris, 1957
(Tres manchas sobre espacio gris / Three Marks on Grey Space)
Mixed media on canvas 162 x 162 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Blanc i ocre sobre marró, 1961
(Blanco y ocre sobre marrón / White and Ochre on Brown)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 162 x 162 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Roig i negre amb zones arrancades, 1963-1965
(Rojo y negro con zonas arrancadas / Red and Black with Tears)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 162 x 162 cm
Toni Tàpies, Barcelona

Ocre-gris sobre marró, 1962
(Ocre-gris sobre marrón / Ochre-Grey over Brown)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 162 x 162 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Composición de llis blanc, 1964
(Composición de la cama blanca / Composition of the White Bed)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 162 x 162 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Dúo blanc sobre ocre, 1965
(Dos blancos sobre naranja / Two Whites on Orange)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 200 x 300 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Les ampolles amb figures, 1971
(Las ampollas con figuras / The Ampoules with Figures)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 200 x 150 cm
Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Mr. y Mrs. / Mr and Mrs. David K. Anderson
Matèria, 1962
(Materia / Matter)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 173 x 200 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Gran matèria amb papers laterals, 1963
(Gran materia con papeles laterales / Large Matter with Lateral Papers)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 260 x 195 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona
61 x 50 cm
Oil on canvas 76,5 x 64,5 cm
Mixed media on wood 1947
Figura sobre madera quemada, 1947
(Figura sobre madera quemada / Figure on Burnt Wood)
Oil on canvas 65 x 54 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Pintura, vernís i gratatge sobre tela / Pintura, barniz y grattage sobre tela / Paint, varnish and grattage on canvas 162 x 150 cm
Clara Tàpies, Barcelona

Pintura del collage vermell, 1984
(Pintura del collage rojo / Painting of the Red Collage)
Pintura i collage sobre tela / Pintura y collage sobre tela / Paint and collage on canvas 200 x 276 cm
Toni Tàpies, Barcelona

Díptic de vernis, 1984
(Díptico de barniz / Dipthich of Varnish)
Pintura i vernís sobre tela / Pintura y barniz sobre tela / Paint and varnish on canvas 220 x 542 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Grafitums sobre gris, 1985
(Grafitos sobre gris / Graphic Signs on Grey)
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 162 x 150 cm
Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona
260 x 195 cm
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 260 x 195 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Donació / Donation / Donation
Mr. i Mrs. / Mr and Mrs. David K. Anderson
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 131 x 105 cm
Toni Tàpies, Barcelona

Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona
200 x 300 cm
Procediment mixt sobre tela / Técnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas 200 x 300 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Barcelona 1947
[Nacional d’Art de Catalunya

List of works at Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya

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Mixed media on canvas
162.5 × 330 cm
Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Díptic amb dues formes corbes, 1988
(Díptico de dos formas curvas)

(Díptico rojo / Red Diptych)

Díptic roig

Fundació Antoni Tàpies,
200 × 300 cm
Mixed media on wood

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on wood
200 × 331 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Infinit, 1988
(Infinito / Infinite)

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on wood
195 × 390 cm
Clara Tàpies, Barcelona

Dos pes sobre gris, 1989
(Dos pies sobre gris / Two Feet on Grey)

Pintura sobre tela / Paint on canvas
200 × 300 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Materia rosada, 1991
(Materia rosada / Pink Material)

Procediment mixt sobre tela / Tècnica mixta sobre tela / Mixed media on canvas
225 × 200 cm
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

Metrova, 1992
(Material-espacio / Material-Mirror)

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on wood
220 × 200 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Cofre, 1995
(Ansats / Anchors)

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on wood
89 × 116 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Cos amb tres cis, 2001
(Cuerpo con tres equis / Body with Three Xs)

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on canvas
175 × 200 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Pintura, latex i assemblatge sobre fusta / Pintura, látex y assemblage sobre madera / Paint, latex and assemblage on wood
200 × 380 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

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Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona
Assemblemate amb porta, 2006
(Asemblemate con puerta / Assemblage with Door)

Pintura, latex i assemblatge sobre fusta / Pintura, látex y assemblage sobre madera / Paint, latex and assemblage on wood
200 × 380 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Terra negra, 2003
(Tierra negra / Black Earth)

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on wood
300 × 250 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Quatre xifres, 2004
(Cuatro cifras / Four Figures)

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on wood
150 × 150 cm
Antoni Tàpies i Família, SA, Barcelona

Cos sobre fusta, 2005
(Cuerpo sobre madera / Body on Wood)

Procediment mixt sobre fusta / Tècnica mixta sobre madera / Mixed media on wood
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Press material

Graphic and documentary material is available in the press sections of the web sites of the two museums. You can also find information on the exhibition web site www.tapiesinterior.com #tapiesinterior

Exhibition app: www.musguide.net

QR code of the exhibition app:

More information

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