

Andrea Mantegna and
the Bridal Chests of
Paola Gonzaga

From the Schilling to
the Euro

Light and Colour

Suite Europa 2002

Faras - A Cathedral in
the desert

MANUEL RIVERA

Exhibition Calendar

Exhibition Review

Press release

MANUEL RIVERA

In the Series of 20th Century Spanish Painting

Palais Harrach, Second Floor Gallery

May 8 till June 19, 2002

Freyung 3, 1010 Vienna

Manuel Rivera (Granada 1927-1995, Madrid) is one of the most important Spanish painters of the second half of the 20th century. His age and artistic development place him among that select group of artists who came together in the decade marked by cultural deprivation immediately following the Civil War but who were able to re-connect Spain to the international developments of Modern Art.

At the end of the war Manuel Rivera was twelve years old. When he was seventeen, he began to study first at Grenada and then at Seville. In 1945, he had his first one-man-show. In 1951, he was chosen to participate in the First Spanish-American Art Biennale held at Madrid. This show was the first sign of an opening of the regime of Franco towards new international artistic trends. From this time onwards, the name of Manuel Rivera was connected with various contemporary and alternative initiatives: the group "Abadla azuli", the International Congress of Abstract Art in Spain in Santander (1953), the Second and Third Spanish-American Art Biennale (Havanna 1953, and Barcelona 1955), etc.

In 1956, Rivera travelled to Paris for the first time, and this strengthened his artistic expression. He began to incorporate metal into his paintings, and later worked it like a relief on a stand. Since then, metal fabrics and wires have remained an integral part of his work. The artist uses them to physically penetrate the two-dimensional universe of painting without ever losing his illusionistic abilities to create imaginary spaces.

In 1957, the year that was to prove decisive for the development of Spanish art in the second half of the 20th century, Manuel Rivera was one of the founders of the historical group EL PASO (Saura, Chirino, Canogar, Feito, Surez, Juana Frances, and the critics Conde and Ayllu); he would remain an active participant in the group's activities until its dissolution in the middle of the 1960's.

Since 1958, Manuel Rivera has participated in individual and group exhibitions held at well-known institutions and galleries both in Spain and abroad. In addition, his work has entered various prestigious collections of modern art (the British Museum in London, the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, the Collection of Contemporary Art in the Museo Patio Herreriano in Valladolid, the Folkswang Museum in Essen, the Kunsthalle in Mannheim, the National Museum of Art in Paris, the MOMA, and the Solomon Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Stedelijk Museum in

Amsterdam, as well as over seventy outstanding public and private collections).

Despite its systematic fidelity to logic, Rivera's oeuvre is marked by a wonderful variety. Or to be more exact, it runs through a variety of thoughts, emotions, and sensibilities, where it starts its journey to inner truth - both towards the subject and the object - but without renouncing the indispensable company of the spectator who changes into a true mediator of aesthetic experience.

Water, a mirror, a window ... time, memory, a glance ... the body, a wound, a cave ... lust, death .. meditation, inspiration, sentimental influences ...the present and the re-erected past, happy expectations and sublime panic of the unknown are just a few of the semantic references in Rivera's oeuvre, whose language knew how to run through the rocky road of occidental sentimentality until it linked up with the Islamic roots and the contraposts of the Far East.

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