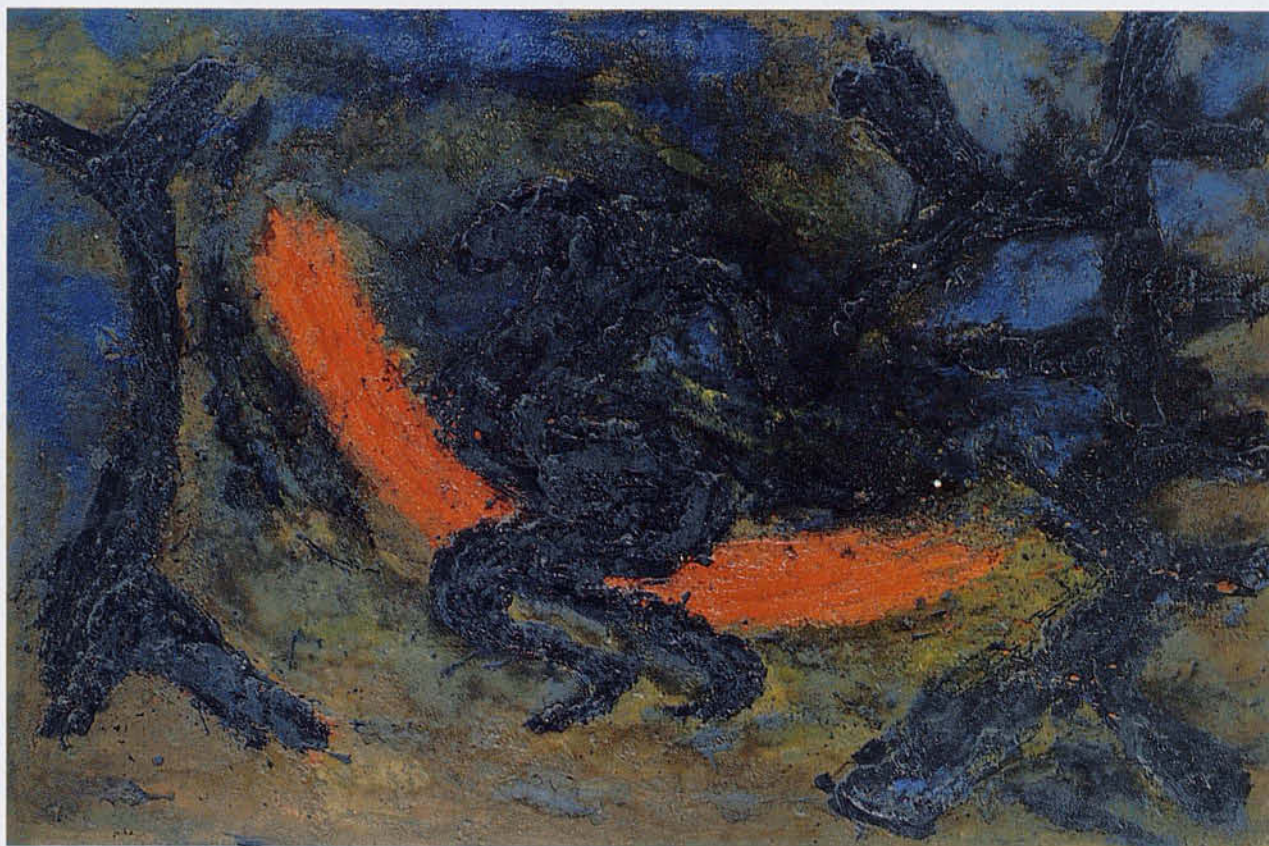


PROMOTING CATALAN ART

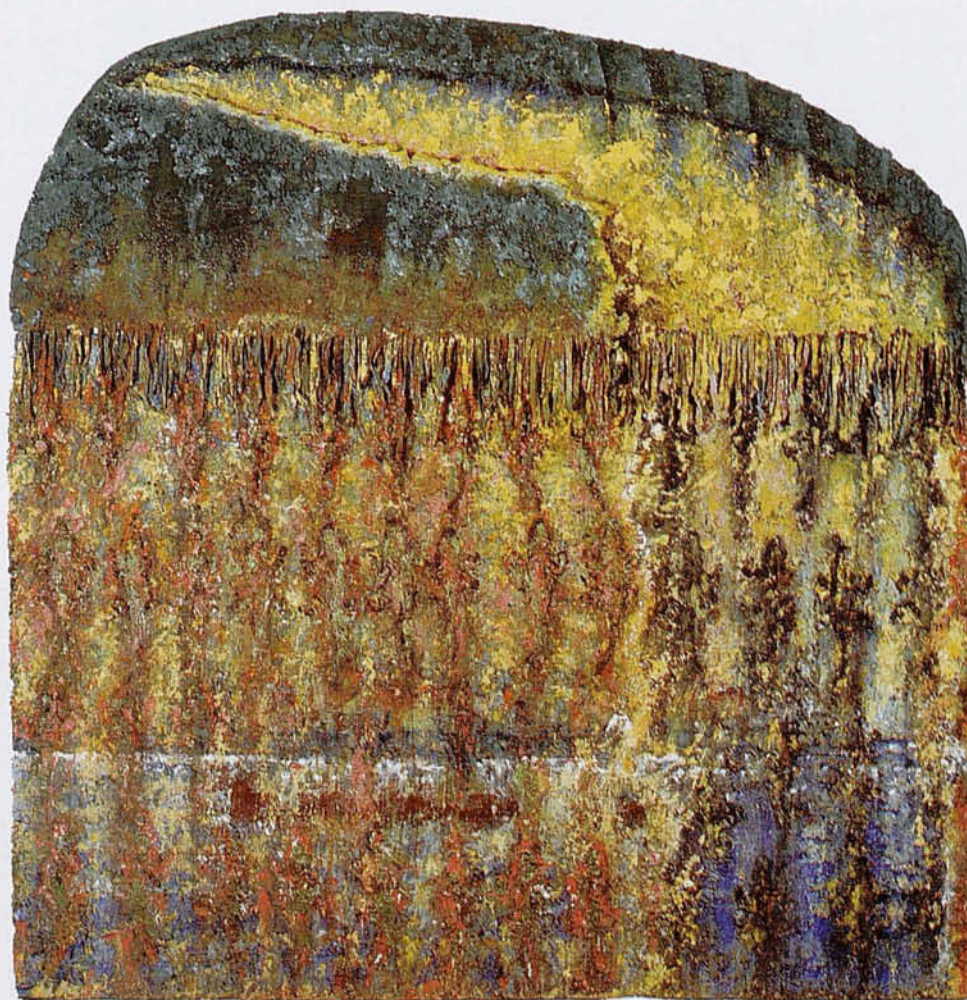


VÍCTOR MIRA. PINTURA DE LA NOCHE -2. JOAN PRATS GALLERY

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THE PRESENCE OF CONTEMPORARY CATALAN ARTISTS IN ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES ABROAD IS GROWING STEADILY. THEIR CONSTANT TRAVELS AND THE PERSONAL CONTACTS THEY ESTABLISH ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE A SIGN OF THE SECTOR'S VITALITY.

MARIA LLUÏSA BORRÀS ART CRÍTIC



FREDERIC AMAT. MOLSA SOBRE ILLANGARDAIX. 1982. GALERIA JOAN PRATS

Until recent years there was no effective or substantial promotion of Catalan art abroad worth speaking of. The country's artists are only now beginning to make a name for themselves abroad. Not only that but there are now signs of certain prospects and even demand for their work.

To say that this progress is a thing only of recent years is not entirely accurate though, as there are precedents it is only fair to mention. Of these, I would like first of all to mention the exhibition *Seny i rauxa*, held at the Centre Pompidou in 1978 at the request of Joan Miró in exchange for the exhibition of drawings the Centre had asked him for. Three Catalan critics (Cirici Pellicer,

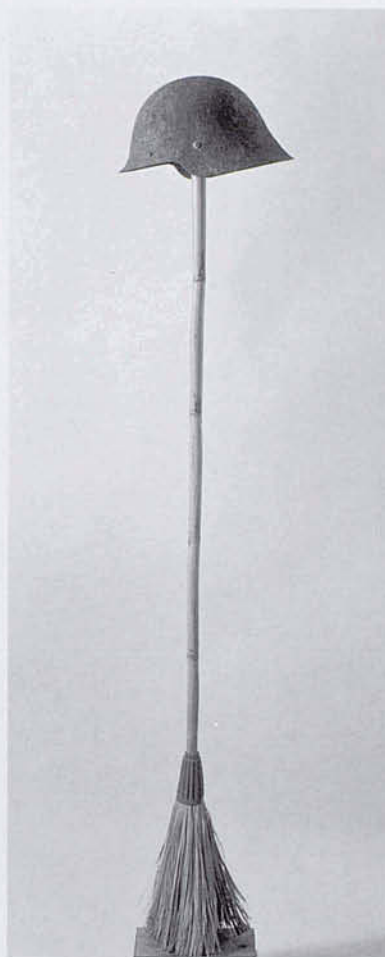
Francesc Vicenç and myself) were called on to make a selection of eight young artists of the time (Amat, Benito, Alfons Borrell, García Sevilla, Jordi Pablo, Pazos, Ponsati and Uclès). I think this initiative by Miró can be looked on as the real turning point, the boost our artists' work needed to be able to take off. Three years later, the Generalitat de Catalunya took a further initiative with the exhibition *La Catalogne aujourd'hui*, an exhaustive presentation of all the Catalan artists, which took place at the UNESCO headquarters. It was a commendable effort which nevertheless failed to achieve the desired success as it was held outside the usual gallery and museum circuit.

Since then, the prestige of modern Catalan art has grown steadily both on its own merits and because during recent years the Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya has given its support to various requests, many of them from different foreign museums, often with the direct collaboration of the Catalan Consortium for Cultural Promotion Abroad (COPEC). The following examples are all from 1994.

Amongst the collective exhibitions are that of the *Generalitat de Catalunya Art Collection* at the École des Beaux Arts at Tolosa; that of *Catalan Conceptual Art* in Manchester and that of *Catalan Sculpture in the Twentieth Century* at the museums of Duisburg, Heilbronn



JOAN BROSSA. PEÓ. 1989. OBJECT POEM



JOAN BROSSA. L'EMPLEAT. POEMA OBJECTE. 1985

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(Germany) and Aarau (Switzerland). Amongst the exhibitions of individual painters are the one by Frederic Amat (*Four Background Landscapes 1975-1992*) at the Tamayo Museum in Mexico; the one by Llimós in Bochum and Göppingen; the one by Zush at the Botanical Museum in Brussels; the one by Antoni Tàpies at the National Museum in Buenos Aires, and the one by Antoni Clavé at the Museum of Fine Art in Chile.

Amongst the exhibitions of sculpture are the one by Roqué at the museums of Bochum and Göppingen, the installation by Jaume Plensa in the Henry Moore workshops in Britain and the one by Enric Pladevall in Singapore. The alternative media have been repre-

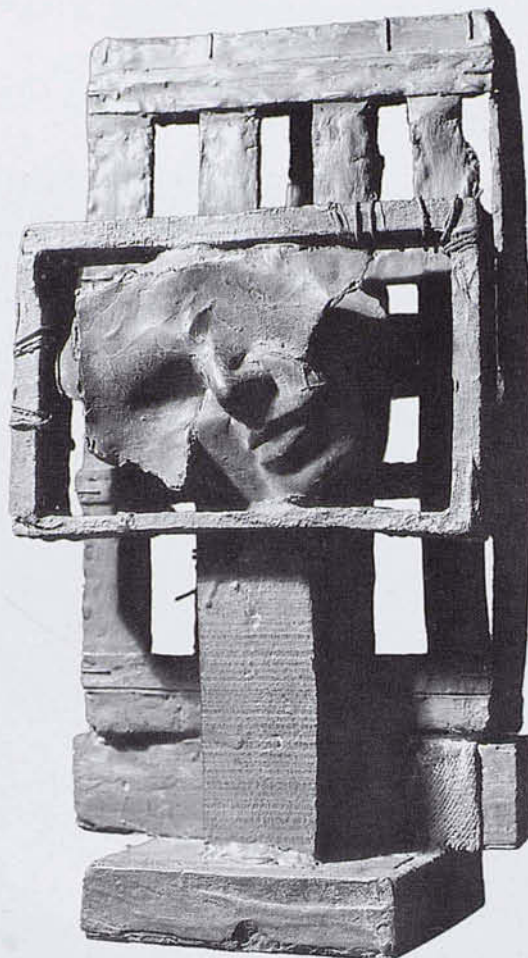
sented in the exhibition by Antoni Muntadas at the Museum of Contemporary art in Bordeaux and *Carambolage* (Four driving forces for Europe: Catalonia, Lombardy, Rhone-Alps and Baden-Württemberg) with Carles Pujol (1992) and Francesc Abad (1994).

The Joan Prats gallery has also done an important job of promotion in this respect, opening a gallery in the United States with regular exhibitions of its artists' work (Ráfols Casamada and Hernández Pijuan, amongst others). The Pecanins gallery also held an important exhibition in Mexico which placed the work of Catalan contemporary artists like Amat or Guinovart in the country's principal museums.

It would also be wrong to overlook the

work of certain Catalan dealers at the great art fairs (Basle, Frankfurt, the FIAC in Paris and especially ARCO in Madrid), where they have promoted the names of Catalan artists –perhaps not as regularly as they should–, with the help, over the last year, of financial aid from the COPEC. Galleries such as the Carles Taché or Joan Prats, Eude, the former Ciento and Dau al Set, and the Gaspar have all been present at these fairs, which regardless of the controversies have been seen by the whole of the professional sector.

Being a restless group and in view of the difficulties they find in this country, with its alarming shortage of collectors, Catalan artists travel, establish personal contacts and manage to find their way



ANTONI CLAVÉ. MOULAGE D'UN MASQUE. 1986

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around with a not always rudimentary knowledge of French and English. So much so that they are almost always somewhere abroad and not always easy to pin down. European collections often include work by Xavier Corberó, Jorge Castillo (until recently based in Catalonia), Víctor Mira, Antoni Niebla, Portamissé, Joan Brossa (who in 1982 held an unforgettable exhibition in Munich at which he sold everything), Joan Gardy, Montserrat Gudiol, Jaume Plensa or Susana Solano, amongst others, since they all frequently work with foreign dealers.

In spite of this, if we look at the collections of foreign museums and take into account only those artists alive today, the work of the Catalans is scattered

and irregular. One exception is Antoni Tàpies, whose work can be found in almost all the world's museums of contemporary art and, without exception, in all the most important ones. There are several artists who have had considerable success abroad (this isn't, of course, an exhaustive account). Antoni Clavé, who lives in the French Midi, has work in the museums of Antibes, Brest, Colmar, Perpinyà, Toulon, Toulouse and in Paris at the Museum of Modern Art, the Musée d'Art de la Ville and the Petit Palais, and in museums in Berne, Geneva, Luxembourg, Cracow, Prague, the Tate Gallery in London and the museums of Tokyo and Sao Paulo. Joan Gardy Artigas, son of the distinguished potter Llorenç Artigas, who

lives in Paris but makes long visits to Gallifa, a village in the Catalan region of Vallès Occidental, not far from Barcelona, has made quite a name for himself abroad both for his ceramics and his sculptures. He has ceramic murals in Switzerland, Atlanta, Miami, Cairo and London and a large, 15 metre sculpture on Mont Blanc. Jorge Castillo has work in Austria (Albertina and the Museum of the Twentieth Century), in Germany, where he lived on a DAAD grant (at museums in Berlin, Bochum, Bremen, Cologne, Darmstadt, Düsseldorf and Essen), in Switzerland (museums in Geneva, Lausanne and Fribourg), in the United States (Museum of San Francisco and the Guggenheim). Guinovart has work at the Museum of



A. RÀFOLS CASAMADA. PENÉLOPE. 1993



ROBERT LLIMÓS, BANY ÀRAB, 1991

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Bochum and the Kampnagel Fabrik in Hamburg, at the Museum of Modern Art and the Museo Carrillo in Mexico, and in the Venezuelan museums of Bartes, Maracay and the Museum of Modern art in Caracas, in the Casa de las Américas in Havana and the Guggenheim and Long Island Museums in New York State. Ràfols Casamada has work in Paris (FRAC and FNAC) at the Martigues Museum and the Mie Museum in Japan. There is work by Hernández Pijuan in museums in Liège, Lodz, Geneva, Leverkusen, Bologna and Helsinki, and also in the North-American museums of Brooklyn, Baltimore, Houston and Atlanta. There is work by Robert Llimós in the museums of Naples, Amsterdam, Miami and Sao Paulo, by Zush

in the MOMA and the Guggenheim in New York, the Royaux and the Museum of Modern Art in Brussels, the FNAC in Paris and the Museums of Contemporary Art in Normandy, Tolosa and Rouen, as well as the Museum of Seoul, by Josep M. Porta-Missé in the museums of Geneva, Quito, Hamburg and Zurich, and by Arranz-Bravo in the museums of Lausanne and Brussels and in the Tokyo Bank in New York.

Xavier Corberó (who lives alternately in Esplugues and New York) has sculpture in the North-American museums of Pittsburgh, Dallas, Washington, San Antonio, Milwaukee, Buffalo, San Diego, Chicago and the Metropolitan; at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Goldsmith Hall and Broad Gate in Lon-

don; at the Stedelijk in Amsterdam and the museums of Mannheim and Stuttgart. He also has urban sculptures in countless cities. There is work by Sergi Aguilar in the museums of Pforzheim and Mannheim, in the Victoria and Albert in London and the Guggenheim in New York; by Riera i Aragó in the museums of Luxembourg, Antwerp and Mexico; by Marcel Martí in the Museum of Antwerp and the Housting Foundation in New York; by Medina Campeny in the Pagnani Foundation and the museums of Syracuse, Brooklyn, North Carolina and Atlanta (J. Carter Collection); by Roqué in the museums of Bochum, Heilbronn and Mannheim, and by Susana Solano in the museums of Nîmes and Bordeaux. ■