

# JOSÉ GUTIÉRREZ SOLANA

MADRID, 1886-1945

## **El constructor de caretas, 1944**

Óleo sobre lienzo. 138 x 113 cm

Firmado en el ángulo inferior derecho: «J. Solana»

Solana, artista de personalidad inconfundible, transmite su visión de la sociedad de su momento en unas composiciones cuya temática forma, sin duda, parte de su propia vivencia personal.

Aunque hay que considerarlo más bien retratista que pintor de retratos, utiliza en esta pintura la imagen de un fabricante de caretas, Emeterio, gran amigo suyo, cuyo taller se levantaba en las Vistillas de Madrid.

El artista, siguiendo su método habitual de trabajo, valora más la representación del escenario, que surge de su experiencia vital, que la del personaje: transmite, a través de múltiples detalles, su oficio, relacionado claramente con el carnaval, tema muy de su agrado, como si quisiera ponerse una máscara ante el mundo que lo rodea.

Aunque conceptualmente su estética es inamovible, se percibe una clara evolución en sus planteamientos técnicos; esta composición simétrica, con espacios muy bien compensados, claramente está ejecutada en los años finales de su producción, en los que decrece la intensidad matérica y surgen figuras como dibujadas al óleo, en una acción paralizada en el tiempo.

## **The Mask Maker, 1944**

Oil on canvas. 138 x 113 cm

Signed on bottom right: "J. Solana"

Solana, an artist with a highly distinctive personality, conveyed his personal view of the society of his time through compositions whose subject matters are undoubtedly connected to his own life experience.

Solana ought to be viewed as a portraitist rather than as a painter of portraits. In this particular painting he depicts Emeterio, a maker of masks who had a workshop in the neighbourhood of Las Vistillas in Madrid.

In consonance with his customary practice, Solana lent greater value to the depiction of the setting, coming straight from his direct experience, than to the character himself. In manifold details he captures the mask maker's trade, evidently connected with carnival, a subject matter very much to the liking of Solana, as if he wished to don a mask to hide himself from his surrounding world.

Although, in conceptual terms, his aesthetic approach remains unchanged, one can however trace a clear evolution in his technique. This symmetric composition, with well-balanced spaces, was created in the late years of his career, when the matter-based intensity of his work was softened and the figures seem to have been drawn with oil paint in an action frozen in time.

# JUAN GRIS [José Victoriano González]

MADRID, 1887-PARÍS, 1927

## **Arlequín, 1918**

Óleo sobre tablex. 60,6 x 37,5 cm

Firmado y fechado en el ángulo inferior izquierdo: «Juan Gris / 1-18»

Viaja sin retorno a París en 1906. Conoce de primera mano el cubismo para, en torno a 1912, reinventar el esquema cubista, de tal modo que, en lugar de que las formas del motivo organicen la composición sea esta, precisamente la que retenga tan solo los elementos claves y decisivos, mediante una trama.

Evoluciona hacia formas más racionales, en las que destacan la pureza y la austeridad, lo que aporta a su pintura un sentido más poético y brillante.

En el verano de 1918 se reúne con Lipchitz y María Blanchard lo que da lugar a mutuas influencias, ejecutando trabajos basados en una misma temática. Abordan entre otros, la figura del *Arlequín*. Juan Gris, en plena madurez, sintetiza las formas con mínimos elementos y simplifica los motivos representados en una composición simple que utiliza para desarrollar y presentar la figura humana a través de planos engarzados entre sí, y que le sirve para resaltar el color, que empasta siempre en diálogo con el azul.

Gris, sin duda, produce lo más puro del cubismo.

## **Arlequín / Harlequin, 1918**

Oil on board. 60.6 x 37.5 cm

Signed and dated on bottom left: "Juan Gris / 1-18"

Gris went to Paris in 1906, never to return. He was involved first-hand in the development of Cubism only to invert its premises around 1912. In a way that, instead of letting the forms dictate the composition it was precisely the latter that decided, through a grid, which main or decisive elements to retain.

Gris then evolved towards more rational forms, in which purity and austerity play a greater role, endowing his painting with a more poetic and brighter air.

Gris spent the summer of 1918 in the company of Lipchitz and María Blanchard, giving rise to a series of mutual influences, creating works which shared a common subject matter. Among other themes, they undertook the figure of the harlequin. Juan Gris, at the height of his powers, synthesised the forms to a very few elements, reducing the motifs in a simple composition that develops and presents the human figure through overlapping planes, and emphasising colour, which he always sets off with blue.

Gris, without the shadow of a doubt, stood for Cubism at its purest.

# FRANCISCO GUTIÉRREZ COSSÍO

SAN DIEGO DE LOS BAÑOS, CUBA, 1894-ALICANTE, 1970

## **Retrato de mi madre**, 1942

Óleo sobre lienzo. 105,5 x 79,7 cm

Firmado y fechado, inferior derecha: «Cossio / 42»

En sus años de formación se acerca al ultraísmo, para en 1923 trasladarse a París donde depura las formas y personaliza su trabajo con superficies brillantes, muy empastadas, con una contenida gama cromática, presentando una rigurosa síntesis formal. Armoniza color, materia y forma, claves indudables de su personalidad pictórica; se erige por ello como protagonista de la figuración lírica de ese momento.

Regresa en 1931 abandonando la práctica pictórica que retoma en 1942, con una obra en la que destacan las veladuras de gran transparencia y belleza.

Cossío solo era capaz de hacer un retrato cuando conocía en profundidad al modelo y quizás por ello este *Retrato de mi madre* está, sin duda, entre lo mejor de su producción. Capta el espíritu sereno y amable del personaje en una imagen que, pese a la fuerte construcción de planos, deshace los contornos, primando la curva; se sirve de veladas atmósferas y cubre la superficie del lienzo con un moteado blanco, muy característico de su trabajo. A pesar de la complejidad de la técnica no abandona nunca el lirismo compositivo.

## **Retrato de mi madre / Portrait of My Mother**, 1942

Oil on canvas. 105.5 x 79.7 cm

Signed and dated on bottom right: "Cossío / 42"

In his formative years Cossío was involved in the Ultraist Movement and moved to Paris in 1923 where where he refined the forms and personalised his work with with highly impastoed surfaces, though in a restrained palette and a strict formal synthesis. He harmonised colour, matter and form, the key aspects of his style as a painter, becoming a forerunner of the lyrical figuration movement of his time.

He returned to Spain in 1931 and abandoned painting only to take it up again in 1942, producing a body of work with beautiful transparent glazes.

Cossío was only able to paint a portrait when he knew his sitter in depth, which is probably why this *Portrait of My Mother* stands amongst his very best works. In it, he captures the serene and kind spirit of the character in an image that, despite the strict construction in various planes, favours curved lines that soften the contours. Here Cossío also used glazes and sprinkled the surface of the canvas with white dots to create the characteristic atmosphere of his paintings. And despite the technical complexity, he never relinquished his compositional lyricism.

# ISIDRE NONELL

BARCELONA, 1873-1911

## **Figura de medio cuerpo**, 1907

Óleo sobre lienzo. 73,5 x 59,5 cm

Firmado y fechado en el ángulo inferior derecho: «Nonell 1907». Al dorso, por el autor: «nonell»

Artista de fuerte personalidad, que se traslada para dos breves estancias a París; a su retorno concibe una obra, basada en la figura humana, aislada y en la que trabaja hasta 1910. Su pintura es incomprendida y rechazada, quizás por la elección de la clase marginal que representa, la mujer gitana envuelta en grandes mantones, pero también por las novedades que aporta pictóricamente.

En 1907 pinta *Figura de medio cuerpo*, momento en el que se produce un drástico cambio en su temática, ya que surgen ahora figuras femeninas de tez blanca, tranquilas, reposadas e incluso melancólicas y en las que el color inunda la composición: superpone blancos y azules que contrasta con las negras cabelleras de sus modelos, eliminando el grueso trazo con el que delimitaba las figuras; en esencia, se decanta por el color como único elemento para modelar la imagen, con unas texturas muy sensuales que personalizan su trabajo.

Esa claridad, ese positivismo hacia el que gira su producción, se debe sin duda a la influencia del *Noucentisme*.

## **Figura de medio cuerpo / Half-body Figure**, 1907

Oil on canvas. 73,5 x 59,5 cm

Signed and dated on bottom right: "Nonell 1907". On the back, by the author: "nonell"

An artist with a highly distinctive personality, Nonell spent a couple of brief sojourns in Paris. On returning to Barcelona in 1900, he worked on a series of paintings grounded in the human figure, which he usually depicted in isolation, on which he continued until 1910. His painting was misunderstood and received a hostile reaction, owing perhaps to the marginal classes he chose to depict, generally gypsy women wrapped in large shawls, but also to the painterly innovations he introduced.

In 1907 he painted *Half-body Figure*, precisely at a time of another drastic shift in subject matter, with the emergence of more serene, collected and melancholic white-faced women. His compositions were now awash with colour, superimposing whites and blues that contrasted with the black hair of his models, and dispensing with the thick outline silhouetting the figures. In short, he opted for colour as the sole element to model the image, with highly sensuous textures that give his works their personal character.

This newfound clarity and positivism of his production was undoubtedly influenced by the *Noucentisme* cultural movement prevailing in Catalonia at the time.

# HENRI MATISSE

LE CATEAU-CAMBRÉSIS, FRANCIA, 1869-NIZA, FRANCIA, 1954

## **Femme espagnole / Mujer española**, 1917

Óleo sobre tablex. 67 x 55 cm

Firmado en el ángulo superior izquierdo: «Henry Matisse»

Para Matisse el color puede evocar cualidades pictóricas, pero también expresar estados de ánimo. Es la utilización subjetiva del color. Forma por ello, parte de un movimiento pictórico, caracterizado precisamente por el uso del color, denominado «fauvismo».

En 1911 visita Andalucía en compañía de Francisco Iturrino, donde su paleta se enriquece con un color limpio, abierto, que no mezcla con claroscuros. A su regreso, se lleva consigo telas de brocado, mantillas y peinetas, que surgen luego en diferentes composiciones.

En este retrato, *Femme espagnole*, aúna la influencia del cubismo, que le lleva a una mayor sintetización, con una percepción o estilo propio más ligero y sutil, más armónico, que se aprecia ya en sus trabajos de 1917. Matisse no mezcla en el retrato de su modelo su figura con el ropaje, omite toda narrativa y toda psicología en el rostro de la mujer, carente de expresión.

La temática española, centrada en la mujer colorista, es un reflejo de la ópera Carmen, estrenada en París en 1875.

## **Femme espagnole / Spanish Woman**, 1917

Oil on board. 67 x 55 cm

Signed on top left: "Henry Matisse"

Matisse believed that a subjective use of colour can, in itself, suggest the whole range of painterly qualities and even express moods. He was a founding member of Fauvism, the painting movement defined precisely by the use of colour.

In 1911 he travelled to Andalusia in the company of Francisco Iturrino. Here the powerful light added intensity to his palette with clean, open colours which he never mixed with chiaroscuros. When he returned to France he took with him many brocades, mantillas and ornamental combs, which would later appear in several of his works.

In this portrait, *Femme espagnole*, he combined the influence of Cubism, which led him to greater synthesis, with a lighter, subtler and more harmonious personal perception or style, noticeable in his works from 1917 onwards. In this portrait, Matisse does not mix the model's attire with her figure, removing all narrative or psychology from the woman's face, which is totally devoid of expression. The Spanish subject matter, focusing on the colourist representation of a woman, is true to the image of Carmen from the opera premiered in Paris in 1875.

# DANIEL VÁZQUEZ DÍAZ

NERVA, HUELVA, 1882-MADRID, 1969

## **Mujer de rojo**, 1931

Temple sobre lienzo. 106 x 89 cm

Firmado en el ángulo inferior derecho: «Vázquez Díaz»

Daniel Vázquez Díaz se traslada a Madrid en 1903 y tres años más tarde a París, donde comienza a mostrar una cierta modernidad, influenciado por Cézanne, del que toma su rigurosa estructuración del espacio, su sintético dibujo, su paleta de grises y sus tonos sensibles y delicados. Regresa a España en 1918, iniciando una etapa dura, ya que fue rechazado debido al ambiente académico reinante.

Trabajó y potenció el retrato hasta el punto de llegar a ser uno de los máximos exponentes de este género, creando toda una galería de los intelectuales de su tiempo. Afronta, en 1931, *Mujer de rojo* de forma simétrica y cortante: su singularidad le permite unificar en su obra el dibujo, la forma, el modelo y el color, que presenta resabios de su paso por París y de su acercamiento a Bonnard en el juego de tonos morados, malvas y carmesíes que brillantemente domina la composición.

Pintor culto, de un gran talento y espíritu renovador, logra establecer un puente entre el academicismo reinante y las vanguardias que vivió y practicó en París.

## **Mujer de rojo / Woman in Red**, 1931

Tempera on canvas. 106 x 89 cm

Signed on bottom right: "Vázquez Díaz"

Daniel Vázquez Díaz moved to Madrid in 1903 and then, three years later, he moved to Paris, where his work began to show a certain modernism, indebted particularly to Cézanne, from whom he undoubtedly borrowed his strict structuring of space, his synthetic drawing, his palette of greys and his sensitive and delicate tones. He returned to Spain in 1918, the beginning of a particularly tough period for the artist, as his work was rejected, largely due to the formal rigidity of academicism still prevailing there.

He cultivated the genre of portraiture to the point of becoming one of its greatest exponents, and his portraits could complete a whole gallery of the intelligentsia of his time. In 1931 he painted *Woman in Red* in a biased and symmetrical composition which seamlessly combines drawing, form, model and colour. The play of purple, mauve, and crimson hues that dominate the composition recalls his time in Paris and his proximity with Bonnard.

A highly talented and cultivated painter with an innovative spirit, he succeeded in building bridges between the academicism prevailing in Spain at the time and the avant-garde movements he had encountered in Paris.

# JOAQUÍN SOROLLA

VALENCIA, 1863-CERCEDILLA (MADRID), 1923

## **Al baño.** Valencia, 1908

Óleo sobre lienzo. 200 x 150 cm

Firmado en el ángulo inferior derecho: «J. Sorolla Bastida / 1908»

Inicia su formación un tanto académica en Valencia y en Italia, que impregna su trayectoria, basada, primordialmente, en el tratamiento de la luz. En la combinación, tradición y luz, podemos encontrar la verdadera personalidad del artista.

Temáticamente se puede señalar el retrato como el género que, aunque no fue el favorito del pintor, sí le aportó una posición económica y un reconocimiento.

*Al baño*, pintada en 1908, durante el verano que pasa en el Cabañal de Valencia, es una obra un tanto significativa, por la sensibilidad que desprende, al cubrir la escena con delicadas luces y utilizar a los niños como instrumento compositivo para dinamizar la pintura, la luz y el color. Con todo, su nota más dominante es el movimiento que les imprime, así como el contrapicado atrevido con el que plasma el agua y su reflejo. Convierte el contraste lumínico en su medio de expresión, y lo imprime con una pincelada gruesa y vibrante. Crea así, una temática preferida a partir de ahora por el artista y aplaudida por la crítica y el público en general.

## **Al baño / To the Water.** Valencia, 1908

Oil on canvas. 200 x 150 cm

Signed on bottom right: "J. Sorolla Bastida / 1908"

Sorolla began his somewhat academic training in Valencia and then in Italy, laying the foundation for his later practice, grounded, above all, in his treatment of light. And it is in this combination of tradition and light that we can find the artist's genuine personality.

Looking at subject matter, although it was not the painter's genre of preference, portraiture was however the one that forged his reputation and assured him a comfortable financial position.

*To the Water*, painted in 1908 during the summer he spent in El Cabañal, in Valencia, was significant in his career, for its heightened sensibility, covering the whole scene with delicate lighting and using children as compositional elements to inject the painting with energy, light and colour. However, the dominant notes are the movement Sorolla instils into it and the bold low angle used to render the water and its reflection. Sorolla turned the contrast of light into his means of expression, applying thick and vibrant brushwork to create a unique subject matter, which, from that moment on, would become the artist's favourite theme and would win him acclaim from critics and public alike.

# FRANCIS BACON

DUBLÍN, IRLANDA, 1909-MADRID, 1992

## **Self Portrait with Injured Eye**, 1972

Óleo sobre lienzo. 35,8 x 30,8 cm

Firmado, fechado y titulado al dorso, por el autor: «*Self Portrait / with injured eye / Francis Bacon*»

Francis Bacon es uno de los grandes creadores del siglo xx, quizás porque en cierto modo su pintura es autobiográfica, al expresar nostalgia, soledad, angustia. Se le ha encuadrado en la nueva figuración, corriente que surge tras la guerra mundial y en la que la imagen es la protagonista.

Decide dedicarse a la pintura, tras una visita a París, donde contempla los últimos trabajos de Picasso.

Crea un estilo propio basado en la figura humana que deforma, altera y mutila hasta límites no utilizados con anterioridad. Formas que ubica en espacios indefinidos, con fondos monocromos.

No pinta al natural, sino que construye los personajes a través de fotografías.

En la pintura *Self Portrait with Injured Eye* parece querer expresar una personalidad autodestructiva, al trazar esta figura deformada y violenta, cuyo rostro descompone con formas geométricas que producen un efecto dinámico. Este autorretrato, distorsionado por el dolor, está pintado tras el suicidio de su amante y modelo Dyer unos meses antes; expresa así su soledad y dolor, incluso su desgarró ante su pérdida.

## **Self Portrait with Injured Eye**, 1972

Oil on canvas. 35.8 x 30.8 cm

Signed, dated and titled by the artist on the back: "*Self Portrait / with injured eye / Francis Bacon*"

Francis Bacon is one of the great twentieth-century masters, perhaps because his painting is somehow autobiographical, expressing nostalgia, loneliness, and anxiety. He has often been included in New Figuration, a movement which emerged after World War II that returned the focus to the figurative image.

He decided to become a painter after a visit to Paris where he saw an exhibition of Picasso's latest works.

Bacon created a personal style based on the human figure, which he distorted, altered and mutilated to an unprecedented extent. He then placed these forms in undefined spaces, against monochrome backdrops. He did not paint from the model, but usually built his characters from photographs.

*Self Portrait with Injured Eye* seems to respond to the artist's desire to express his self-destructive personality through a disquieting, violent image with geometric forms that decompose his face in a highly dynamic effect. Distorted by pain, this self-portrait was painted a few months after the suicide of Dyer his lover and model, and expresses Bacon's solitude, grief and even despair at his loss.