

PORTRAITS: ESSENCE AND EXPRESSION

PERMANENT GALLERY 1



Daniel Vázquez Díaz, *Mujer de rojo*, C.1931.

Essence and expression are the two keynotes defining this collection of twentieth-century masterpieces, which its owner, Jaime Botín, has generously deposited at Centro Botín for its permanent display.

These eight works of undisputed visual quality are by renowned, prestigious artists: Francis Bacon, Juan Gris, Francisco Gutiérrez Cossío, José Gutiérrez Solana, Henri Matisse, Isidre Nonell, Joaquín Sorolla and Daniel Vázquez Díaz. They were all produced in the early twentieth century at the height of the avant-gardes, a complex period that saw a break from tradition and the rise of a wealth of overlapping artistic and aesthetic movements.



Juan Gris, *Arlequin*, 1918

All these works share three common features that define and personalise the group: maximum expression through colour and light; the use of the figure as a common means of communication; and, finally, portraiture, the true essence of the selection.

Self Portrait with Injured Eye was painted by Francis Bacon in 1972, a few months after the suicide of his model and lover, George Dyer. The painting expresses Bacon's solitude, bereavement and his deep sorrow following his loss, while at once capturing his self-destructive personality through a disquieting, violent image with geometric forms that decompose his face and produce a highly dynamic effect.

Juan Gris painted *Harlequin* in 1918, at the height of his creative powers, synthesising the forms to a very few elements and reducing the motifs in a simple composition that develops and presents the human figure through overlapping planes. He also uses the character to emphasise colour which he always sets off with blue.

Francisco Gutiérrez Cossío is one of the most important artists to have come from Spain. In *Portrait of My Mother*, painted in 1942, 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.

In *The Mask Maker* José Gutiérrez Solana painted the portrait of his friend Emeterio in his workshop in Las Vistillas in Madrid. The artist captures his friend's personality in a symmetric composition, with well-balanced spaces. The work comes from his late production and, notwithstanding the overall blackness, it is a colourful painting endowed with an atmosphere all of its own.

In *Spanish Woman*, Henri Matisse recalls his journey to Spain in 1911 to visit the Prado Museum and to see Andalucía, from where he returned to France with luggage full of brocades and mantillas and a powerful new light in his palette, that would be materialised in clean, open colours, which he does not mix with chiaroscuros, thus translating into a lighter and more subtle, more harmonious style.

Isidre Nonell painted this *Half-body Figure* in 1907, at a time when he abandoned his portraits of gypsy women, the main characters in his works until then, and started to paint more serene, collected and melancholic white-faced women. He



Joaquín Sorolla, *Al baño*. Valencia, 1908.

also opted for colour as the sole element used to model the figure, superposing whites and blues to contrast with the black hair of his models.

To The Water by Joaquín Sorolla is a work of great sensibility and refinement which was painted in the summer of 1908 on the beach of Valencia. Especially worth underscoring is the delicate use of light and his restrained palette, rendered with thick brushstrokes and bright contrasts.

Daniel Vázquez Díaz is one of portraiture's greatest exponents. *Woman in Red* was painted in 1931, after the artist settled in Madrid. Particularly notable is the expression and emotion on the face of the character and the essence as a reflection of a spirit that transcends expression itself.

A sombre and nostalgic air hovers over all these paintings, as if shrouded in a great transparent mantle of melancholy.

María José Salazar

MORE INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES BROCHURE AND AT WWW.CENTROBOTIN.ORG

HOURS

Winter opening hours
(October to May)
Tuesday to Sunday,
10am – 8pm.

Summer opening hours
(June to September)
Tuesday to Sunday,
10am – 9pm.

Closed
Every Monday.
1 January and
25 December.

ADMISSION FEES

General admission: €8.

Free admission (upon the presentation of relevant documents):
Friends of Centro Botín, holders of the Pass, children under 16, unemployed, sponsors and press with accreditation as well as cardholders of: ICOM, CIMAM, IAC, Sotheby's Preferred and SOY de Mutua Madrileña.

Concession (ID required): €4.
People over 65, students aged 16 to 25, people with disabilities and large families.

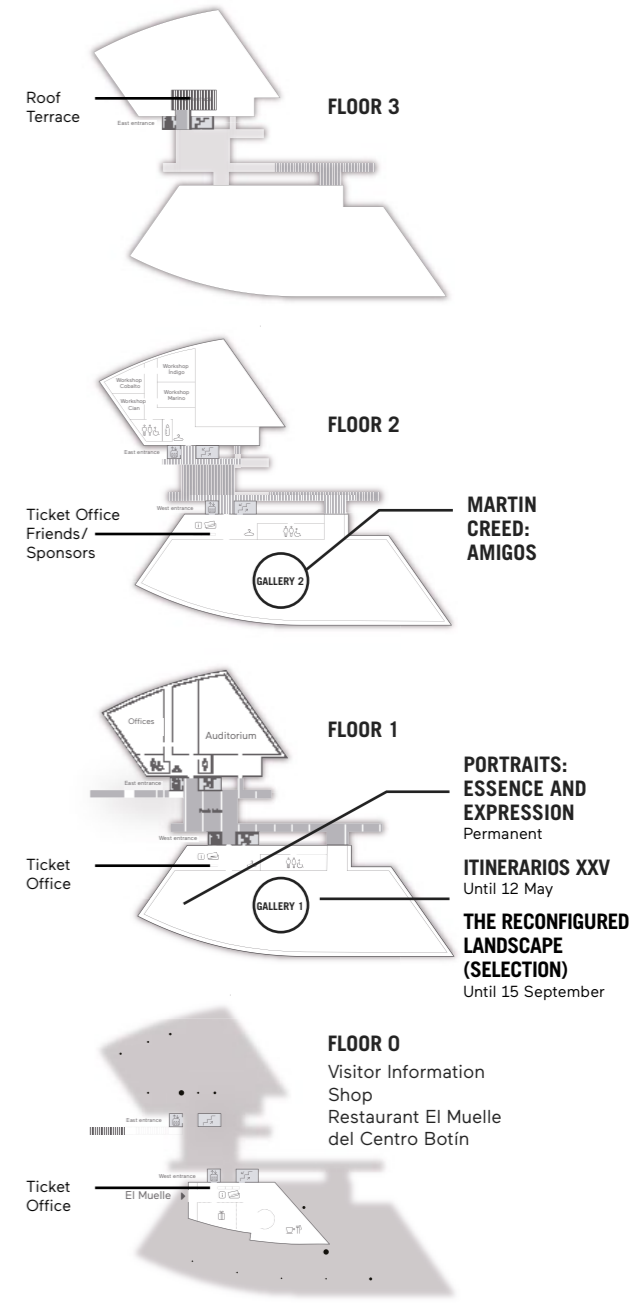
Group admission: €6 per person.
-between 8 and 30 people (guide included)-.

CONSULT EXHIBITIONS AT
#ItinerariosXXV
#MartinCreed



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centrobotin.org



MARTIN CREED: AMIGOS

6 APRIL
9 JUNE
GALLERY 2

Curator:
Benjamin Weil



Martin Creed, Work No. 1781, 2013. Photo: Genevieve Hanson. ©Martin Creed. All Rights Reserved, DACS/VEGAP 2019

Stretching from the surrounding Pereda gardens all the way into the second-floor galleries, by way of the East volume elevator and the second-floor lobby, the project that Martin Creed unfolds at Centro Botín occupies not only spaces usually dedicated to the exhibition of artworks, but also intermediary spaces where one would rarely stop at or pay attention to. In that sense, Creed breaks the physical and institutional boundaries between the exhibition and the rest of the building. The experience of his show is paced by the performance of four roving musicians wearing costumes he designed; they interpret a new score written during the

course of a workshop that took place immediately before the exhibition. A set of wall drawings covers every single inch of white wall on the second floor, while all the staff who cater to the visiting public are dressed in uniforms altered by Creed. Furthermore, the elevator is fitted with a sound installation.

One could follow the musicians or decide to await their return, wander around and enjoy the bright colours of the wall drawings, their monumentality contrasting with the relative emptiness of the open space. At each end of the gallery, the views from the large bay windows seem to have been



Work No. 2482, 2015. Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich. ©Martin Creed. All Rights Reserved, DACS/VEGAP 2019.

incorporated into this multi-dimensional and pluri-disciplinary art experiment.

Martin Creed likes to use the word “show” to describe his work, as it refers not only to traditional exhibitions, but also to concerts or time-based performances. He prompts his audience to reflect on the notion of the exhibition as an experience in space and time rather than the contemplation of a set of fixed objects.

Experimentation, doubt and humour are fundamental aspects of a practice that sets out from the premise that all art comes from feeling. Disrupting the hierarchy that usually prevails in the art institution — one generally focuses one’s attention on works of art, less on architectural details, the quality of the light, or the presence of

gallery attendants — Creed fosters a sense of acute awareness, a perceptual shift that results in a new aesthetic order, as well as a different relation to the space and one’s time spent in it. In that sense, he immerses the visitors in a different spatiotemporal dimension.

Looking out North through the bay window, one will encounter a set of brightly coloured letters installed in surrounding trees, which form the word “Amigos” (Friends). The piece gives its title to this new show by the famed British artist, who became known to the world when he won the much-coveted Turner Prize in 2001 with *Work No. 227: The lights going on and off*, consisting exactly of that: a bare space of the museum appearing and disappearing, as its lights are switched on and off.

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