

VALL PALOU in DIALOGUE AND RECENT WORK FROM TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN

In this exhibition, in Dialogue, Vall Palou's own paintings and raku pottery initiates a relationship of cohabitation and discourse with works by artists from the Foundation's own collection.

The exhibition is arranged as a circuit with vanishing points in space or frontal viewpoints with the works of the artists in Dialogue encircling the space. All grouped together with works of different periods and styles and also with works by Vall Palou never exhibited before.

Six nucleus of dialogue have been created where the works of Markus Oehlen, Krishna Murari, Ravi Agarwal, SabhanAdam, Herbert Brandl, Günther Förg and Vall Palou engage in a dialogue. Also, the most recent large format paintings by Vall Palou, from 2013, are presented separately in the new extension. They represent a synthesis, a culmination and a beginning.

The setting of the German artist's work, Markus Oehlen, defends a positive and playful vision of the struggle between opposites in a reinvention of painting, as is also the case with Vall Palou's work; from the decomposition of the image and new techniques of viewing; from the reality of abstraction and from gestural painting to painted music with its sharp acid colours and its forms and background in motion.

The sculpture of the young up-and-coming Indian artist, Krishna Muhrari, is a figure covered in animal skin. It stands like a modern totem putting soul into the haunting images of destruction and pain unlike the lifeless taxidermy of the world of show business and consumption. Video images are visual documents of the real - so human, as is the imaginative approach with no discernible forms in Vall Palou's paintings, fighting against the power of devastation and the manifestation of evil.

Ravi Agarwal's installation in the sand near the river, photographed by this environmental activist and artist, focuses on the wounded earth. In this case, that of nature torn by urban over-exploitation. The fertile shoots of life are replaced by implacable violence. The wounded painting has been one of abstract informalism's most expressive research into painting, a trend that Vall Palou has explore with perseverance and originality.

The two extraordinary majestic paintings – almost murals or even totems – by the Syrian artist, Sabhan Adam, distort the sense of beauty in a double maxim that Vall Palou indorses; “The more we explore the techniques of portrait painting away from photographic realism, the better we capture the human soul, and the more we gaze on the face and body of the helpless the greater the expression of humanity our paintings posses. Therefore, far from the doctrine of the copy and the tenet of idealism, which has been a long tradition in the West and also, in this case, the Middle East, painting is a path to figurative introspection, be it inner or outer introspection. In another aspect, Vall Palou's mysterious smoke black raku sculptural creations, displaying evidence of gestural expression with clearly marked tactile impacts, express the struggle against the canons of form, between the beauty of rest and the scars of incandescence.

The landscape of Herbert Brandl, celebrated Austrian painter, like much of European painting, which reinvented itself in the eighties, is both, abstract and figurative, very expressive, to the point that the thick fast brushstrokes and the overlapping colours achieve a freedom of form and a reference in representation. The pictorial quality creates a sensitive landscape, unprecedented or evoked and it reminds us of the permanence of nature in what is a society in a state of flux. Vall Palou's landscapes, more emotive, re-establish the essence of painting as nature itself, without reference, pure creation, endogamic, without equivalence.

Gestural rhythm, simple shapes, doodles; order and harmony, horizontal and vertical structures refer to a state of primal innocence that art seeks in order to cast off academism and rhetorical excess. Günther Förg's exercises on paper, geometric and decorative, converse with two great traditions: architectural rationalism and American abstraction. In Vall Palou's paintings, presented here, Mediterranean culture is clearly present, close to the fertility of the planet and to human instinct, with earthy fruity colours, the dripping technique used and the non-symbolic doodling achieve a rhythm and pace of a frolicking dance.

To summaries, Vall Palou's work arose, like many of these artists', in the period of renewal and reinvention of painting in the eighties. It has followed its own exploration and research with great intensity, dedication but also in isolation till achieving its own voice in the different traditions and styles that artists have explored throughout these years. The impressive results of this research are exhibited alongside works from the Foundation's own collection and in a singular act the most recent works by Vall Palou are on view in the new extension to the Foundation's exhibition gallery. With a tempered and at times jubilant virtuosity, Vall Palou's pictorial force achieves a great richness of expression of cautious formal freedom and at the same time, through the gains of what modern painting has accomplished, a hint of classicism is still recognizable.

Vicenç Altaió, poet and art critic.