



MONA GUERRA

ESSENTIAL PORTRAITS

March 24 - May 7, 2022

Curators:
Regina Pérez Castillo and Pepo Pérez

Exhibition Hall of the Rectorate
of the University of Malaga



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MONA GUERRA. ESSENTIAL PORTRAITS

Mona Guerra (Madrid, 1942) is a visual artist based in the province of Malaga for the last fifty years, whose work has not reached the deserved outreach due to generational and cultural reasons.

Her work is a successor of the post-Cubist exploration that developed in the Spanish art scene between the 1940's and the 1950's. From the beginning, her visual language was already perceived as quite groundbreaking. Not straying away from the figurative, Guerra showed a certain inclination for the geometric configuration of faces and landscapes, as well as a free and expressive gesture in drawing. These traits are consolidated throughout her career: first, in the academy of Eduardo Peña and, later on, in the studio of the painter Pedro Mozos (both located in Madrid). Her visual language, however, will be decisively influenced by the painter Juan Manuel Díaz-Caneja, with whom she shared many experiences and from whom she took that way of representing and looking at reality in its "primitive" essence, unveiling it in shapes of complex simplicity.

Back in her formative years, despite her young age, she was part of an intellectual community from Madrid. During this time, the artist had already begun to produce a consistent, introspective pictorial body of work, isolated from any official circuit. Her paintings and drawings focus on genres such as landscapes, still lifes and portraits. There is a persistent work of analysis and synthesis that goes from the figurative to the abstract, seeking the dissolution of both categories. In her own words: "The first movement determines the next; each stroke must successively fit exactly where it belongs. For me, it's mathematic. Any wrong movement means returning to the starting point or discarding the work. Regarding aesthetics, I prefer to sacrifice the representative for the line. And adding what's just enough." For Mona Guerra, it's not about representing reality as it is, but about reinventing it. "I am more interested in the process of construction than in the motive from which I start. Painting or drawing is moving in space with coordinated movement. It is music, dance."

Portrait is one of her favourite genres, especially during her last decade. Her creations evidence a mastery cultivated over the years, a synthesis of extraordinary elements and purification. Her education was always linked to Cubism, either directly (as we already pointed out, she was the student of Díaz-Caneja) or indirectly (she specialized in drawing by studying the masters of Cubism). This education provided her with a unique ability to see reality and reduce it to its essential elements.

Mona Guerra. Essential portraits is an individual exhibition that seeks to highlight the importance of the painter from Madrid and her trajectory. This exhibition is shaped around the latest portraits produced by the artist, (2019-2022) as well as drawings and paintings that have been worked on and refined from successive notes and studies, and which are inspired by family, friends, and acquaintances. These portraits are extremely simple in appearance, only a few lines compose them, and yet they perfectly capture the energy and the personality of the sitter. By capturing the gesture of the person and synthesizing it in a few strokes, Guerra is capable of constructing authentic psychological portraits.

By means of different techniques (charcoal drawing, pastel and acrylic) and a high conceptual thoroughness, the artist dives us into a pictorial world that moves back and forth between the figurative and the abstract, the geometrical strokes and the expressive ones, the sobriety of black on white and the explosion of colors, the direct gaze and the dodging ones.

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