Antoni Tàpies
Revulsion and Desire
16 February — 18 March 2017
Timothy Taylor is honoured to present an exhibition of works by celebrated Catalan artist Antoni Tàpies (1923–2012) that, for the most part, have never been shown outside of Spain before. Emerging in the period between 1999 until the artist’s death, these late works, often monumental in size, reveal the artist at his most vigorous.

As early as 1955, Antoni Tàpies declared: “If forms are not capable of wounding, irritating or inducing society to meditate, to make it realise how backward it is, if they are not a revulsive, then they are not authentic works of art.” This position is evident in the works he produced throughout his long and prolific career, not least of all the explicitly confrontational, ambiguous works produced after 2000.

Tàpies believed that an artist’s responsibility was to interpret the contemporary situation. Now more than ever, these late works seem to demand a reflection on the human condition. In bringing us directly back to the body, in confrontational works that suggest violence, sex, bodily excrement – the abject – Tàpies undermines the ease of disassociation our screen-based culture has produced.

Tàpies was of the generation defined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s assertion that instead of understanding our bodies as something we have, we rather are our bodies. For Tàpies, the body was a site of representation since the 1950s, and a way of exposing what we refuse to see and confront, but that is essential to understanding our own conscience.

In order to access the universal through the personal, Tàpies employed pathos – an artwork’s ability to effect an emotional response in an audience by triggering a personal recollection. In Cames i AT (2011), the artist offers us a pelvis and legs, as well as genitalia comprised of abstract, black gestures and human hair. This bold image is juxtaposed with the artist’s name, and the name of his wife, suggesting a portrait — the union of man and woman, a figure neither explicitly male nor female, but possibly both. This way interpretation is left open through strategic ambiguity.

According to Theodor Adorno’s definition of ‘late’ in an artist’s oeuvre, the works included in this exhibition can be categorised as such due to their fragmentary nature — where the process is manifest, and the works maintain the “superiority of their mystery.” The fragment became a more determined strategy for Tàpies in his late work.

Tàpies flirted with figuration and abstraction simultaneously. Even at his most abstract, images emerge from matter. In the painting Matèria sinuosa (2010), violent images materialise from the seemingly abstract forms, suggesting a human torso and arms engaged in a brutal act. While his materials create an immediate, physical experience, his distortion of the image has an unsettling effect — matter offers nothing concrete. In this way the viewer completes the work by intercepting the image with personal experience and imagination. As he stated in conversation with Barbara Catoir in 1991: “I see that by barely suggesting things the association of ideas I like to provoke in the spectator widens.”

Antoni Tàpies was one of Spain’s most accomplished and prolific artists. He extended Spain’s early avant-garde lineage (Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí) to become a leading figure in the country’s art world in the second half of the twentieth century. His work is included in numerous public and private collections internationally including Tate Galleries, UK; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, Rome; Le Centre Pompidou, Paris; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Tàpies represented Spain in the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993 and was awarded the Golden Lion. He remained an influential presence in Spain for over sixty years, until his death in 2012.
Antoni Tàpies

*Capcirat*, 2005

Mixed media and collage on wood
88 5/8 × 78 3/4 in.
225 × 200 cm
T0010905

Provenance

Estate of the artist
Antoni Tàpies
*Materia sinuosa*, 2010

Mixed media on wood
63 × 63 in.
160 × 160 cm
T0010900

Provenance
Estate of the artist
Antoni Tàpies
*Personatge*, 2011

Mixed media on wood
63 3/4 × 51 1/8 in.
162 × 130 cm
T0010910

Provenance
Estate of the artist

Exhibitions
*Tàpies. Lo sguardo dell’artista*, Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy, 1 June—24 November 2013
Antoni Tàpies

*Mitjà hàbil núm. 8.125*, 2004

Mixed media on wood
118 1/8 × 98 3/8 in.
300 × 250 cm
T00190901

Provenance
Estate of the artist

Exhibitions
*Tàpies, Des de l’interior*, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain, and Museu Nacional D’Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, 8 April—24 July 2011, cat. no. 104

Literature
Antoni Tàpies

Cames, 2010

Mixed media on wood

25 5/8 × 63 3/4 in.
65 × 162 cm
T0010902

Provenance

Estate of the artist

Exhibitions

Antoni Tàpies. Cap braços cames cos, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain, 22 June—4 November 2012, cat. no. 6
Realisme(s). L’emprenta de Courbet, Museu Nacional D’Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, 8 April—24 July 2011

Literature

Antoni Tàpies

t Cames i AT 2011

Mixed media on wood
59 1/8 × 59 1/8 in.
150 × 150 cm
T0010903

Provenance
Estate of the artist

Exhibitions
Antoni Tàpies. Cap braços cames cos, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain, 22 June—4 November 2012, cat. no. 35
Antoni Tàpies
*Cames i diari*, 2005

Mixed media and collage on wood
21 1/4 × 25 5/8 in.
54 × 65 cm
T0010904

Provenance
Estate of the artist

Exhibitions
*Antoni Tàpies. Cap braços cames cos*, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain, 22 June—4 November 2012, cat. no. 16
Antoni Tàpies

Respiració, 1999

Mixed media on wood
18 1/8 × 21 5/8 in.
46 × 55 cm
T0010906

Provenance
Estate of the artist

Literature
Antoni Tàpies
*Materia amorfa*, 2001

Mixed media on wood
38 1/4 × 51 1/4 in.
97 × 130 cm
T0010306

Provenance
Estate of the artist

Exhibitions
*Antoni Tàpies*, Sala de Cultura García Castañón, Fundación Caja Navarra, Pamplona, Spain, 16 May—16 June 2002

Literature
Selected Public and Private Collections

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, USA
Allen Memorial Museum of Art, Oberlin College, Ohio, USA
Ars Nova Museum, Turku, Finland
The Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland, USA
Centro Atlântico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, Spain
Centro Calego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela
City Hall, Barcelona, Spain
Essl Museum—Kunst der Gegenwart, Klosterneuburg, Austria
Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, Switzerland
Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence, France
FRAC Picardie, Amiens, France
FRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Marseilles, France
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain
Fundació Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona, Spain
Funcació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain
Galerie für Moderne Kunst, Hannover, Germany
Galleria Communale d’Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy
Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy
Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Göteborg, Sweden
Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain
Hakone Open-Air Museum, Hakone-machi, Japan
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., USA
Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
I.V.A.M. Centre Julio González, Valencia, Spain
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland
Kunsthalle Hamburg, Germany
Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland
Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland
Kunstmuseum Berlin, Germany
Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland
Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark
Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, USA
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Musée Cantini, Marseilles, France
Musée d’Art Contemporain, Montreal, Canada
Musée d’Arte Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, France
Musée d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Imber, Caracas, Venezuela
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Internacional Rufino Tamaya, Mexico D.F., Mexico
Museo de Arte Abstracto Español de Cuenca, Spain
Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Madrid, Spain
Museo d’Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy
Museo d’Arte Moderna, Venice, Italy
Museo de Arte Moderno, São Paulo, Brazil
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
Museu d’Art Contemporain, Barcelona, Spain
Museu Colecção Berardo, Lisbon, Portugal
Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain
Museum Bochum-Kunstsammlung, Bochum, Germany
Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany
Museum Lissone, Milan, Italy
Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany
Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria
Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Vienna, Austria
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Museum of Modern Art, Shiga, Japan
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany
Ohara Museum of Art, Okayama, Japan
Reed College, Portland, Oregon, USA
Sammlung Essl, Vienna, Austria
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, USA
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, UK
Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan
Sezon Museum of Modern Art, Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan
Sintra Museu de Arte Moderna, Portugal — The Berardo Collection
The Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany
Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Germany
Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
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