

Equipo 57

19 December 07 - 2 March 08

The book accompanying this exhibition is also available: *Equipo 57*, edited by Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, la Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales.

Cover: Untitled, 1958, oil on canvas. (Fragment)

Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

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Timetable

1 October - 31 March
Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 20 h.
Saturday: 11 - 20 h.
Sundays: 10 - 15 h.

Monday: closed.
Holidays: Consult with Centre.

Access

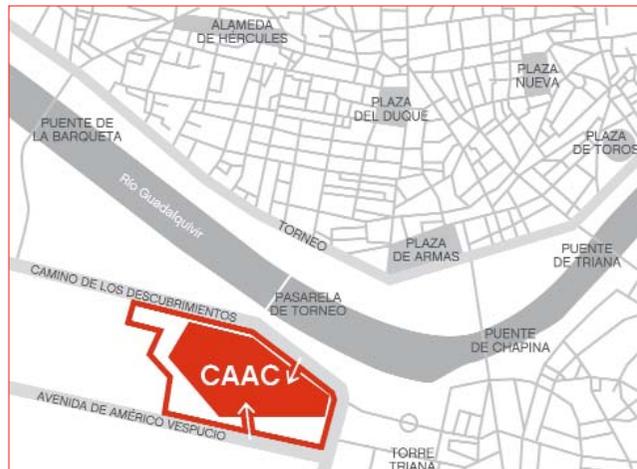
Avda. Américo Vespucio nº2
Camino de los Descubrimientos s/n

Transports
C1 and C2 buses

Library

Monday to Friday (except holidays):
9 - 14 h.

Tickets sales until 30 minutes before closing.



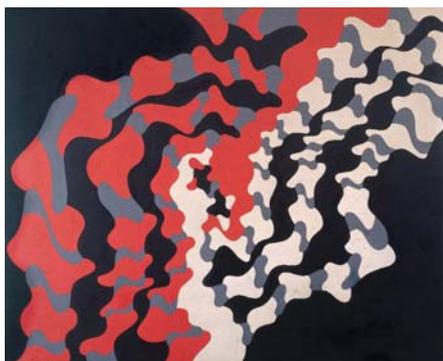
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Equipo 57

Half a century has passed since the creation in May 1957 in Paris, of the *Equipo 57* collective of young, committed Spanish artists who had travelled to the French capital attracted by its cultural dynamism, anxious to discover the artistic avant-gardes and to find ways in which to channel their aesthetic concerns, so enormously different to the localist Spanish tradition fomented by the Franco regime in the post-war years.

Ángel Duarte (Aldeanueva del Camino, Cáceres, 1930 - Sion, Switzerland, 2007), Agustín Ibarrola (Bilbao 1930) and from Córdoba Juan Serrano (1929) and José Duarte (1928) met in 1957 in Paris, where they were soon to work along the same conceptual lines, partly because of the influence exercised by the sculptor Jorge de Oteiza, from whom they were to become estranged that same year as a result of the publication of the group's first radical manifesto. In it they denounced mercantilism in art and the stagnation of plastic forms and proposed a collective approach without personalisms or individual authorship. The



Untitled, 1961, oil on canvas

group was joined a little later by Juan Cuenca, also from Córdoba (Puente Genil, 1934), who remained until its dissolution in 1962.

Meanwhile, on the international art scene the last episodes of the struggle between New York and Paris were being fought out for cultural hegemony after the Second World War. A strong new identity was becoming consolidated on the other side of the Atlantic, heir to European modernity, but increasingly independent in its artistic and cultural manifestations and identifying with *action painting* as its own culture. At the same time, in Europe, informalism was developing as various expressive tendencies revealing the anguish and despair of the post-war years. Both attitudes showed neither prior structure nor control of the emotions when confronting the picture surface.

However, in the 1950's other circles in Europe and South America were speculating with artistic criteria of another dimension, centred on notions such as mobility, change or synthesis, seeking, in the words of Miklos Pasternak "a recontextualisation of the categories of space, light, movement and temporality, in sum, the attempt to set the



Untitled 1959, Bronze on black patina

starting point for a new origin" (1). This attitude led to the formation of such research groups as *Arte Concreta* in Milan, *Espace* in Paris, *Exat* in Zagreb, *Gutai* in Japan, *Equipo 57* in Spain, *Gruppe Zero* in Germany, etc. The investigations carried out by these collectives can be considered as attempts to break with the type of dramatic narration typical of the individualist expressionisms.

So *Equipo 57* was to move along these paths, attempting to reconcile plastic investigation with scientific reflection, for which they adopted a work practice based on prior discussion and research before the collective execution of the art works.

The need to expand plastic space led them to formulate the *Theory of Interactivity*, in which they stated that form, colour, line and mass do not exist as independent elements, but that everything is space, differentiated by its dynamic function. Form-Space is reduced to *space-colour* in painting and to *space-mass* and *space-air* in sculpture, each one the result of an interdependence.

This theory can be seen in operation in the abstract film *Interactividad I*, shown in the exhibition and made in 1957 using over 400 collectively painted watercolours (some of which are also on show) arranged as frames to produce the sensation of movement.

Equipo 57 created different paintings and sculptures. In their evolution, the former began with a preponderance of straight and curved lines separating the different colour planes, which gradually became arranged according to a more serial concept. The first



Bench, 1960, Beech wood and stainless steel

sculptures, on the other hand, were pieces with mass and volume of organic appearance that could connect with the work of Hans Arp, until research centred on the interrelations between planes and surfaces using materials such as galvanized wire rods or plaster. Although references to the constructivists Naum Gabo and Anton Pevsner are inevitable when using paraboloids, *Equipo 57* moved away from them by overcoming the Russians sculptors' plane limitations and discovering that by juxtaposing two or more hyperbolic paraboloids they produced a spatial continuity of double curvature that gave their pieces greater dynamism.

The practical application of their theories led *Equipo 57* to design prototypes of functional furniture that could easily be set up and dismantled using assemblages of parts. They were awarded prizes and exhibited just as any work of art together with the team's pieces of painting and sculpture in different galleries in Madrid and Córdoba.

During its short life, *Equipo 57*'s activity was intense, as was its international projection. Apart from their reflections, investigations and works, created and shown at prestigious galleries in Paris, Copenhagen, Zurich, Brussels and Spanish cities such as Madrid, Córdoba, Barcelona and Valencia, their work as agitators by *Equipo 57* was equally important for the formation of other artistic groups sharing their spirit of social and political commitment. Likewise, they brought about social transformations such as the radical change in methods of teaching the arts. Through their lectures, encounters, debates and publications, which are fortunately stored in the archives, we can understand the coherence of their essential ideas, on which they based their experimental attitude and their peculiar sense of historical dialectics.

(1) Miklos Pasternak "Beyond Geometry: Experiments in Form, 1940's - 1970's" - LACMA, 2004