

The Schizos of Madrid

Madrid's Figurativism of the 1970's

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CHEMA COBO

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LUIS GORDILLO

SIGFRIDO MARTÍN BEGUÉ

HERMINIO MOLERO

LUIS PÉREZ-MÍNGUEZ

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GUILLERMO PÉREZ
VILLALTA

MANOLO QUEJIDO

JAVIER UTRAY



GUILLERMO PÉREZ VILLALTA, *Grupo de personas en un atrio o alegoría del arte y de la vida o del presente y del futuro, 1975-76*. MNCARS

The exhibition entitled **The Schizos of Madrid. Madrid's Figurativism of the 1970's** approaches the complex vital and cultural environment of Madrid in the last years of Franco's dictatorship and the first years of democracy, based on the activities and work of a group of artists who decided to embrace figurative painting despite the period's dominant political and aesthetic conventions. This exhibition intends to provide a general review of the period, exploring the cultural effervescence of these years from an unbiased and critical standpoint.

Madrid's figurativism included Carlos Alcolea, Chema Cobo, Carlos Franco, Herminio Molero, Guillermo Pérez Villalta, Rafael Pérez-Mínguez and Manolo Quejido, artists all

present in this exhibition. There are also works by other artists who joined the movement afterwards, or who were tangentially involved, such as Jaime Aledo, Bola Barrionuevo, Carlos Duran, Carlos Fornas and Sigfrido Martín Begué, as well as pieces by photographer Luis Pérez-Mínguez, companion and witness of their whole career. Visitors can also contemplate the work of Luis Gordillo, as the closest Spanish referent, and two personalities who played a leading role in shaping the new figurative artists: Juan Antonio Aguirre, artist and critic, who supported them from the very beginning in his position as manager of the Amadis Gallery, and architect Javier Utray, the theorist and binder of the group.

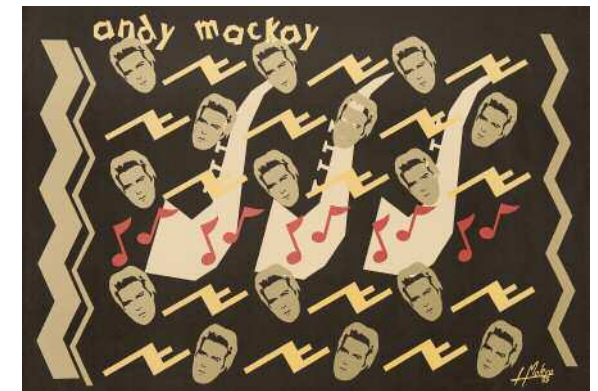
The exhibition covers a chronological span which goes from 1970 to 1985, a time when the national art scene had undergone a definitive change. The various rooms enable the reconstruction of the path taken by these artists right from



MANOLO QUEJIDO, *Quico (Rivas)*.
El Taco series, 1978. Artist collection



CARLOS ALCOLEA, *La camarera roja*, 1973.
Palмира Utray collection



HERMINIO MOLERO, *Andy Mackay*, 1975.
Fundació Suñol

their beginnings, to show the uniqueness of a proposal that emerged from an elaborate synthesis of multiple and seemingly contradictory stimuli. Particular emphasis has been laid on the behaviour of these painters as a group who shared concerns and desires, supported by a growing number of art galleries, encouraged by a new generation of critics with whom they shared interests and ambitions, and recognised by the mass media. The name schizo, an idea at the time by the Trama group, refers to the theoretical substrate derived from Deleuze and Guattari's work - implicitly or explicitly present in their artistic discourse - and also to the metaphorical figure of the schizo, as it was a characteristic of these artists to mix all parcels of knowledge to problematise the context in which they moved. Thus, admiration for Dali and De Chirico comes together with Duchamp's legacy, a look at David Hockney, Frank Stella and Alex Katz is combined with the lure for Stanley Kubrick and Walt Disney's films and David Bowie and Brian Ferry's music and image, along with Raymond Roussel and the International Situationist's readings.

In the exhibition the meanings of this corpus of works are reviewed from a new perspective, both aesthetically and socially and politically. In this regard, the iconography of many of the pieces reveals a lack of inhibition in the social behaviour of a Spain that did not wish to be left out of international concerns. "We were not regular fighters", said Herminio Molero on one occasion, "really, our way of fighting was to ignore the fact that there was a dictatorship. For us it was already dead, and we behaved as if it were so". This choral portrait of Madrid's art scene of the seventies and eighties attempts to rigorously apprehend the benchmark backroom accumulated by these artists, nurtured by both the desire to embody the role of the artist belonging to the "high culture" and to take a dip into the popular culture of the moment, thus comprising a unique schizoid character. Despite the inevitable linguistic differences, the exhibition affects the attitude towards life, the aesthetic choices and the firm commitment to conceptual content painting that they all unanimously shared.