



ARTUR RAMON ESPAI D'ART

Dominica Sánchez

Painting, drawing and sculpture of the 2000s

In memory of the art critic Maria Lluïsa Borràs

27.01.22 - 04.03.22



Pastel pigments on paper, 100 x 70 cm.

One day I received a small, well-edited catalogue from the Museum of Sant Pol de Mar where I discovered the work of the artist Dominica Sánchez. It was 2002. The artworks reproduced there — made with charcoal and pastel pigments — had been kept by the artist for many years. Now we present them as a tribute to the critic and curator of that exhibition, Maria Lluïsa Borràs — who is no longer with us, for more than ten years.

Dominica's work is multifaceted. Based on drawings and sculptures, it experiments with various supports — paper, wood and linen. Everything is linked and constitutes part of the same organic world. She uses her body as a compass, creating a continuous line spelling. The result is the creation of austere works, with geometric, synthetic and elegant shapes; in the years that we present — around 2002 — she highlights the harmony of colour as a background. There are parallelisms between her works, but drawings are not the groundwork of sculptures, nor sculptures derive from drawings. The sculptural geometric shapes are first made of cardboard as a sketch or previous element and then transferred to iron. They are unique pieces of black iron or lacquered in red or green, always worked by hand and in a traditional way.

That small catalogue of the Sant Pol de Mar exhibition was a kind of revelation for me, and I became obsessed with knowing who that artist was and seeing her work. I located her by phone and I immediately felt that she was an affable and very close woman: from the first moment I foresaw that this relationship, which was then beginning, would turn into a good friendship. The exhibition was over, but soon after Dominica Sánchez exhibited with gallery owner Fidel Balaguer, who also ended up being a good friend. At that time, the Fidel Balaguer gallery, located in a flat on Consell de Cent Street, brought together many artists and there was a magnificent relationship between all of them, as if they were a family. Those were some memorable years of my relationship as a gallery owner with the contemporary world. Dominica was the oldest of all and she gave us wise advice about art and life.

All Dominica's workshops have been an extension of herself, pleasant and warm, both in Aribau Street and in Calella. In our conversations, the already mentioned text of Maria Lluïsa Borràs has appeared different times. It was titled "Intimate and spiritual landscapes" and it is a delight, which is why we transcribed it entirely at the end of this dossier.

The exhibition that Artur Ramon Art presents is not only by Dominica Sánchez. Her background goes further. Behind the works hides the warmth of the friendship of that generation of artists with whom we share so much. And it is a heartfelt tribute to who has been one of the best art critics that this country has brought forth in the 20th century: Maria Lluïsa Borràs. She was the secretary of Joan Miró, and one of the creators of his foundation in Barcelona. She was a great connoisseur of the first avant-gardes, especially Picabia, but also Calder, and she appreciated both consolidated and emerging art. Indeed, Borràs gave impetus to artists who were not yet in the gallery circuit at that time like Dominica Sánchez herself, despite having a more established career in France. Borràs said: "The main task of today's critic is not to judge. It was, but not anymore. Now the priority is to share the keys that one possesses to help understand what the work tells them. The art critic is not a judge: it is a bridge between artists and the public." That was her, a bridge, a beacon in the stormy sea.

Mònica Ramon



Pastel pigments on paper, 100 x 70 cm.

We can imagine that works of art gather the artist's time and channel it towards the viewer. First of all, there is quantitative time, that part of the artist's lifetime dedicated to their work, but there is also the circumstantial, historical, time; which we would refer to as their time. In any case, there is a transfer of temporality that operates in artistic activity, so that the viewer, upon acceptance of participating in this artistic game, also must bring their own time to the table own time. When contemplating a work, it is not sufficient to say "I've seen it", since seeing, in the same way as music, must last in order to become fully alive. It is in the act of seeing over time, with extension and repetition, that the coming and going of perception can evolve in the mental space and be expressed in some form. Otherwise, without this process of evolution, without the emotional volumes that occupy our mind, without nuances that expand and thereafter wane, art would be little more than an exercise, art would be (in)ert.

In this sense, it strikes me that this exhibition recovers works from some twenty years ago. I would say that in this bid to show works done long ago, there is a pulsation revindicating art as life, of the many paths that open between vital experiences and art, which are so diverse. This is not new, but I mention it now to express my feeling. I am inclined to view this exhibition in relation to the time of execution of the works, and particularly in relation to the time of her childhood, which is the furthest, oldest, and at the same time, the most intuitive and emotional of the personalities being accumulated. In this way, I like to imagine that the traces Dominica Sánchez draws correspond to the gesture of a girl, in a kind of game, and for this reason they fit in the material support they have, which - to understand our meaning - is the size of an arm's width. Or the superposition of graphite curves and spots that seem to cover other previous ones evoke folds of laundry hung out to dry or a close-up of a braid of hair magnified in the drawing. Or that the creamy colour present in some of the works is in reality the sandy colour of La Monumental (a bullfighting arena), near where Dominica Sánchez spent her childhood, and that the sensation of volume we perceive in the curves comes from the muscular curves of horses, seen through the eyes of the child in the stables of the same arena. And also, finally, that the austere and rigorous aesthetic of Dominica Sánchez's work springs from the collective difficulty of the post-Civil War period and the ensuing repression endured, in that childhood time between the decades of the 40s and 50s of the last century.

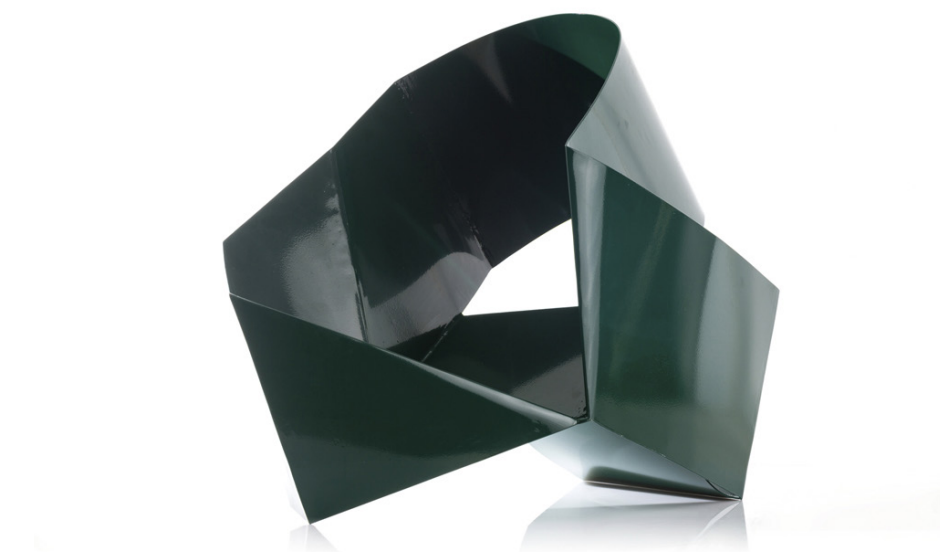
We can imagine the figures perceived by her, as they would appear, gesticulate, and fall, as if they were some sort of plant life, such as a leaf. All of these figures I have mentioned must fall eventually, if they have not yet done so, making space for the new figures of other times that must grow in their stead. In 2002, when Dominica Sánchez presented some of these paintings in the Museo de Pintura de Sant Pol de Mar, Maria Lluïsa Borràs, in a beautiful text, positioned them within a spiritual tendency of Catalan painting, introspective yet at the same time evocative of nature. It is due to this introspective and spiritual quality that Dominica Sánchez's painting allows us to exercise our insight, to question what would be, to express it in some way, life seen in this way, as in a painting.

Joan Puigdefàbrega

Joan Puigdefàbrega is linked to the art world through the Museum of Painting of Sant Pol de Mar. As a poet he has published the books *Antilles* (Leonard Muntaner, 2010), *Casa Nostra* (Tinta Invisible, 2013) and *Deshora* (Edicions 62, 2017), and has translated Víctor Segalen and Manuel Antonio into Catalan.



Pastel and charcoal on board, 122 x 122 cm.



Enameled iron. Manual manufacturing. Unique piece, 45 x 60 x 36 cm.











Pastel and charcoal on board, 122 x 122 cm.



Iron. Manual manufacturing. Unique piece, 28 x 38 x 14 cm.



Charcoal and oil on cotton, 120 x 120 cm.



Pastel and charcoal on wood, 122 x 122 cm.

Intimate and spiritual landscapes

By Maria Lluïsa Borràs

The first time that Dominica Sánchez showed me her painting, I was struck by the expressive power of her language, which had reached a significant level of personal elaboration. Little by little, I initiated a fascinating discovery of a long process marked by her investigation of her own self and memory, a process of extreme austerity and authenticity. I also seemed to detect these two qualities in the recent restructuring of her workspace, in the new atelier in the Eixample (a neighbourhood of Barcelona), a space in ruins restored with simplicity and in an equally austere and authentic manner.

It requires time to contemplate a work, because it is not something that can be achieved in a brief glance. As I delved deeper into her painting, its extraordinary rhythm and chromatic harmony made me think of a musical composition. At first, I compared it with the austerity of the Gregorian chant, but immediately after perceived the pursuit of new sounds that characterises recent Catalan music. It is not the spectacular and provocative music of Carlos Santos, but rather the more intimate acoustical effects, contained yet innovative, achieved by musicians such as Mestres Quadreny or Joan Guinjoan.

Where do these natural forms come from, which the painter organises in such perfect balance and musicality? Perhaps they do not come totally from her imagination, because I find allusions to the natural world. To my eye, they are a series of *interior landscapes* (given that *interior landscape* is the only genre contributed to painting during the last century); painting which describes the emotions, the sensations, the state of being of the painter

without recurring to reality and which, far from reproducing what can be seen with the eyes, is based exclusively on properly pictorial elements, such as form and line, structure or colour. According to this view, Dominica Sánchez's paintings are in reality interior landscapes, a painting of atmosphere, sentiments and of emotional states.

There is, in effect, a highly marked degree of introspection and even mysticism in her work, but also, and this is what makes it extraordinarily human, an evocation of nature. Further, it concerns painting which is open to different readings and interpretations, which can propose, as it has done recently, a dialogue between geometry and organicity, managing to centre the free and spontaneous play of a geometric figure's curve, within a square.

It is intimate and secret painting, spiritual in the sense that Vassily Kandinsky gave the term, marking its meaning forever afterwards in his anthology. There are not many, from Kandinsky on, who have formed part of a saga of painters ascending a true scale of perfection, and who have expressed themselves through mystical, profound painting, beyond worldly matters.

Even if it is not a fashionable trend, spirituality has marked the most significant artists of Catalan painting, from Antoni Tàpies to Joan Miró. We should include in this same spiritual tendency, from now on and in her own right, painting by Dominica Sánchez, now exercising full mastery over expressive media. She achieves painting that is formally highly demanding, rigorous, technically excellent and at the same time, is full of emotion and of poetry.



Solo exhibitions (selection)

- 2020** Marita Segovia Gallery, Madrid.
- 2017** *Dominica Sánchez. Perfils d'ombra, dibuixos i escultures.*
Curator: Josep Casamartina
i Parassols. Ajuntament de Calella.
- 2014** Artur Ramon Contemporáneo, Barcelona.
- 2010** *Dibujos y escultura*, Michael Dunev Art
Projects, Torroella de Montgrí.
- 2006** *La forma de les hores*, Fidel Balaguer
Gallery, Barcelona.
- 2005** Arte Cité-Caroline Dimnik, Paris.
- 2002** Museo Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona.
- 1999** Galería Astarté, Madrid.
- 1996** Galería Maeght, Barcelona.
- 1994** La Gare Gallery, Bonnieux in Luberon.
Jacques Ghul Gallery, Montreux.
- 1993** Scott Alan Gallery, New York.
Melten Gallery, Casablanca.
- 1992** Adriana Schmidt Gallery, Stuttgart.
Geiger Gallery, Kornwestheim.
- 1991** Adriana Schmidt Gallery, Cologne.
Denise Levy Gallery, Espace
Fürstenberg, Paris.
- 1989** Galería Tom Maddock, Barcelona.
Norai Gallery, Pollença.
- 1983** Galeria Cap i Cua, Canet de Mar.
- 1981** Espacio de Cultura "La Caixa", Calella.

Group exhibitions (selection)

- 2021** *Dualidades*, Pigment Gallery.
Art Paris, Grand Palais, Pigment Gallery.
Templarios, Caravaca de la Cruz, Murcia.
- 2020** Antonio Pérez Foundation. *Artistes en
la col·lecció d'art Banc Sabadell*. Centro
de Arte Contemporáneo de Cuenca.
Art Paris, Grand Palais, Pigment Gallery.
- 2019** Draw, London, Pigment Gallery.
Art Busan, Korea, Pigment Gallery.
- 2018** Texas Contemporary, Pigment Gallery.
Art on paper, NYC , Pigment Gallery.
The Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair,
Londres, Marita Segovia.
- 2017** Wopart, Lugano, Pigment Gallery.
SOFA, Chicago, Pigment Gallery.
Context, Miami, Pigment Gallery.
- 2016** ArtMadrid, Marita Segovia.
- 2013** PINTA London, Galería Balaguer.
- 2008** Art Paris, Gran Palais. Haim Chanin,
New York.
"66 pieces" Haim Chanin. New York.
Hang Together, Michael Martin. San
Francisco.
New York/Tampa. Bleu Acier Gallery.
- 2007** Palm Beach Design Fair, Caroline Dimnik
Contemporary, Palm Beach.
- 2006** Toronto International Art Fair. Caroline
Dimnik Contemporary, Paris.

- 2005** Art-Istanbul'05. Caroline Dimnik
Contemporary, Paris.
Spain Revisited, Haim-Chanin Fine Arts,
New York.
- 2002** Decorart, Zaragoza. Galería Ignacio
de Lassaletta.
- 2001** Michael Martin Gallery, San Francisco.
Carol Rubinstein Gallery, Philadelphia.
- 2000** Betty Wasserman Gallery, New York.
- 1999** Artissima'99, Torino. Galería Astarté,
Madrid.
- 1997** Laurie Seeman Gallery, New York.
- 1994** FIAC '94, Paris. Adriana Schmidt Gallery,
Stuttgart.
Pinturerías, Museo del Palacio de Bellas
Artes, México DF. Itinerant exhibition:
Monterrey, Aguascalientes, Tijuana,
Cabañas, Querétaro, Denver, Long Beach.
- 1992** Découvertes' 92, Grand Palais, Paris.
Denise Levy Gallery.
Chapelle des Jésuites, Nîmes. Denise
Levy Gallery.
- 1990** Art Jonction International, Niza. Tom
Maddock Gallery.
La Mujer y el Arte, Palau Marc, Barcelona.
Institut Català de la Dona.
Kobe Spanish-Japanese Exhibition, Hotel
Majestic, Barcelona.

Collections

Colección Nacional de Arte de Cataluña.
Museo de Cerdanyola.

Eusebio Díaz Morera-Marta Ventós,
Barcelona.

Hotel Sant Francesc, Palma de Mallorca.

Artur Ramon Art, Barcelona.

Marianne Mathieu, Paris.

Can Mario, Fundación Vilacasas.

Museo de Arte Moderno y Instituto
Nacional de Bellas Artes, México.

Museo Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona.

Litexco Collection, Barcelona.

Banc Sabadell Collection.

Museo de arte de Cerdanyola M.A.C
(Can Domènech).

Collection of Ernesto Ventós.

Collection of Denise Levy, Paris.

Collection of Hotel Majestic, Barcelona.

Collection of Dominique Haim
Chanin N.Y., EEUU.

Collection of Gilles Gobin, Paris.

Collection of Collserola Foundation.

Grants

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