

Signs and Writings.

Josep Suñol Collection

10th June to 25th September, 2010

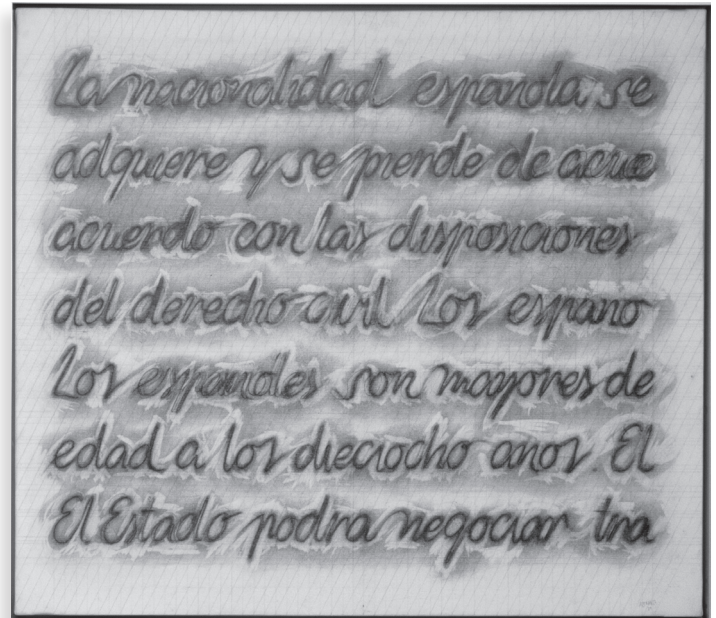
Codes and systems of symbols have been commonly used throughout the course of history to organise individual senses and facilitate their collective comprehension. From the birth of writing to the current makeup of alphabets there has been a slow evolutionary process of different writing systems to represent concepts: from pictograms and ideograms, logograms, syllabic signs and letters to the written or spoken word, the writing system was created to decode ideas and aid human communication.

SIGNS AND WRITINGS was designed to create a thought-provoking space on the role of signs and writing in the plastic arts in the second half of the 20th century. The exhibition takes a look at these symbolic applications as a structure for thought and subsequent aesthetic expression.

All the works in this exhibition form part of the Josep Suñol Collection and were created between 1972 and the present day. The forty-two pieces chosen here reveal the recurring use of signs and writing in painting, collage and tapestry as a visual reading of the artists' need to communicate.

Works by Robert Llimós, Antoni Tàpies and Zush offer us a certain vision of the creative process and the manifestation of a unique, unseen language, together with artists such as Ignasi Aballí, Darío Villalba, Carlos Pazos and Joan Rabascall, whose pieces contain more explicit narratives. All these works use signs, the alphabet or writing as structural components of composition. And this unanimous interest might well be the result of a specific sensibility in the second half of the 20th century, a time when the study of language permeated all fields of knowledge. In the art sphere specifically, new interests arose in place of many of the figurative references belonging to the European tradition of previous centuries.

In addition, the definitions of semiotics by Ferdinand de Saussure clarified the relationships between the emitter and receiver, who has to interpret them. Later, Roland Barthes put forward a system for examining comprehension of language and society, understood as a construction perpetuated by each collectivity's cultural values. With



José Luis Alexanco. Dieciocho años, 1978

Barthes, semiology as an attitude rather than a process took on a specific functionality. On the contrary, a reading of Umberto Eco's work again reveals spectators' leading role as creators of new senses in the work of art, developing perceptive, imaginative or creative behaviour governed by universal interpretation of codes.

The combination of all this has led to artistic contributions of multiple polysemy, which this exhibition aims to show with signs and writing as the backbone to the aesthetic language, whose iconography of composite material lines sketches out the artists' thoughts and is genetically contained in their signs, in the world of their ideas.

1.

Signs.

Visual signs lie at the origin of nonverbal and non-sound-based communication. In the field of art, the presence of signs leads us to observe and then interpret the concepts expressed by artists who incorporate them into their creative language. Artists use signs to express their vision and emotions, their aesthetic experience of both the exterior world and what is happening in their inner world. The pieces included in this section show symbols or indecipherable lines that reveal the artists' original communicative intent, far removed from explicit texts.

2.

Towards a reference to words and text.

Some artists make use of written references whose meaning lies somewhere between what is evident and what is suggested. But they do so not with a decoded text that lets observers literally transcribe a concept as a narrative structure, but rather with the artists' material lines drawing out their thoughts through symbols and fragments of letters, alphabets, signatures and writings that complement the aesthetic composition of the work.

3.

Letters, Collages and Typographies.

The artistic language of the 20th century elevated the alphabet to the category of aesthetic parameter, introducing evolved typographies and graphic art. Artistic movements such as Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Lettrisme, Constructivism and Pop Art are some of the avant-garde currents that took up the alphabet and visual language as part of their ideologies and productions. Collages, evolved typographies and graphic art are some of the resources represented in this section.

4.

Explicit Texts.

The exhibition, as with all communicative acts, evolves from signs to writing. From abstract, evocative gestures to manifest narrative. The works we find in this space all share the use of words – linked together more or less tightly – to form a text. They paint through writing and the paintings are read visually, linking a clear reading of the work with its aesthetic formulation.

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Josep Suñol Collection

11/06/2010 – 25/09/2010. Curated by: Fundació Suñol



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OPENING HOURS:

Monday to Saturday, 4pm to 8pm. Closed Sundays and Public Holidays

To visit outside these times, please telephone or email for an appointment
