

Rosa Amorós

Despojos i dèries

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ENGLISH
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Despojo VII, 2014. © Rosa Amorós. VEGAP, Barcelona, 2015

This exhibition at the Fundació Suñol presents a retrospective on **Rosa Amorós** (Barcelona, 1945), an artist who has always had close ties to the collection. Josep Suñol began acquiring her works in the early 1980s, as his collection was growing, and they have since forged a deep bond above and beyond mere patron and artist. Throughout her career, Amorós has explored the questions that have intrigued humans since time immemorial: creation myths, religiosity, the nature of existence, our relationship with others, the human condition in general and how people from different cultures and times have sought answers. She has fashioned a highly personal, poetic oeuvre using an unusual, underrated material in contemporary art: fired clay.

CLAY AS A MATERIAL

Clay has always been a key material in sculpture, although traditionally it was used to make moulds for pieces that were finally cast in bronze or carved out of stone or marble. It is not commonly found in modern art, and only a few contemporary artists use it regularly. Nonetheless, as the quintessential raw material, it features in many legends from antiquity that emphasise its ductile, malleable, almost animate nature when fresh and its fragility once dry. Moreover, work in fired clay preserves the human handprint, a distinctive trait in Amorós's pieces. Her work

reveals how she uses this primordial material to shape the key motifs in her imagination: death, sex, love, origins and human destiny, interpreted through matter, gesture and the artist's memory.

Although pottery has always been characterised by its refined glazes and finishes, Amorós's pieces reveal this material to be an amorphous mass, full of signs that speak of how she experiences the world through the body, allude to knowledge acquired through touch and reveal the feelings linked to these experiences: deformity versus perfection; visceral force versus balance and precision.

CERAMICS AS A FORM OF EXPRESSION

Her creative process is driven by intuition—her most basic feelings and primordial impulses—which turns her sculptures into a kind of debris that hints at something prelinguistic, eminently corporeal and tactile. Her work is full of references to the notion of flow, gushing, spilling liquid and the energy of nature; other pieces evoke the human body with hints at bodily fluids, human organs and excremental forms. Critics have taken this to suggest that her work explores the formless, in French intellectual George Bataille's sense of the concept: an aesthetic category that questions logical limits, rational language and taxonomies. In the case of Amorós, this relationship with the formless reveals itself in the way she pushes the limits of her field of work, the absence of form in her pieces and her tendency to lay pieces horizontally, bringing them close to the ground.

ANCESTRAL ECHOES

If Rosa Amorós's work sets out to question logic, then it is through myths and poetic visions that we can hope to penetrate the meaning of her work. Her organic sculptures are full of mythological references. Several of them have titles that refer to the names of Greek and Mesopotamian divinities, including **Gaia** (the Greek mother goddess), **Tiamat** (the Babylonian goddess of the oceans) and the **Anunnaki**, the collective name for the heavenly gods in the ancient Middle East. Other pieces, such as those in the **MO** series, can be related to bulky Hindu lingams, ancient totems and monoliths and mother goddesses from different cultures—divinities linked to the origin of the world, as is the very material these sculptures are made out of: earth. In addition, her skulls become a direct metaphor of death: as in the vanitas style of painting, they serve to remind us of the transitory nature of life and its cyclic character from the beginning of life energy to its end.

TWO-DIMENSIONAL WORK

In her paintings and drawings, Amorós shows expressive skills in keeping with her sculptural work: she explores abstract language by evoking a physical side that also recalls the flow or vibration of energy, as we can see in pieces like **Gligau** and the painting **Papallona** [Butterfly].

The conversation between Helena Tatay and Pedro Azara, included in the exhibition catalogue, gives us an insight into the essence of the pieces in **Despojos i dèries** [Debris and Urges], a title that clearly announces the introspective, emotional, intuitive and unabashed character of the works we will see in the different galleries and gives us a glimpse at what Rosa Amorós aims to offer us in this show: the debris and obsessions of her soul revealed through the raw reality of clay and gesture.

Rosa Amorós. *Despojos i dèries*

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