

PEPE ESPAÑA

Antonio Pérez Foundation, Cuenca ES
until December 1st, 2013

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

The opening of the exhibition Pepe España, Back to the Beginning will be held at the Antonio Pérez Foundation's Contemporary Art Museum in Cuenca. The exhibition is promoted by the Antonio Pérez Foundation

(Government of Cuenca) and the Pepe España Foundation (Aarau, Switzerland) and it represents the revival of an artist who, since he moved to Switzerland in the 1970s, was only known by specialists of that period. Pepe España (José Luis Jiménez España, Málaga, 1930 - Biel, Switzerland, 2007) began his artistic career in the 1950s involved with the first attempts in our country to renovate expressive forms. In the early 1960s he went to Cuenca, where he settled down between 1967 and 1973. The place was

of major significance in his career as it was the epicentre of cutting edge artistic expression and he became one of the first "discoverers" of what at that time came to be known as Abstract Cuenca. The city was home to the artists who belonged to the so-called "Cuenca Group", the driving force behind the creation of the Spanish Museum of Abstract Art, which opened in 1966.

In the early 1970s in the "abstract city" he created his well known series *La cinta* (1970-1971), a set of acrylic paintings that received critical acclaim at the time, as it combined elements of abstract innovations, the new geometries and conceptual art. It was flat painting, with bands of colour, and an air of pop, in the 70s when assertive imagery was all the rage. His was a very personal vision and therefore very difficult to compare with that of his contemporaries. Pepe España took a very meta-artistic approach to his creative process, in which his extraordinary drawing skills and extremely personal use of colour always predominated. The series *La cinta* embodied an analysis of the encounter between artistic figure and form, between sinuous shape and straight line, between the picture and its representation in painting, thus audaciously marking the beginning of one of the key periods of his production, which Simón Marchán Fiz, one of the critics who followed this artist most closely over time, called "a distanced and objective representative adventure", and hence akin "to the new airs of objective figuration that would underscore the decade of the 1970s".

His neighbours and friends included artists such as Antonio Saura, Antonio Pérez, Gerardo Rueda and Bonifacio Alfonso, his house was near José Guerrero's, his drawing was highlighted by Fernando Zóbel, and his work was regularly shown in the numerous galleries that sprang up in Cuenca, under the umbrella of the above-mentioned museum. He was also represented by one of the most important galleries in Madrid at that time: the Seiquer gallery. And he had an exhibit at the Spanish Pavilion of the New York Art Show in 1968. Although he was well known in Switzerland, where his work received remarkably widespread acclaim, he was not recognized in Spain, possibly because he left as a young man and remained abroad for more than three decades, until his death.

Exhibition view





Pepe España, "La Rosaleta",
Sutz-Lattrigen, 2005

The exhibition, curated by Alfonso de la Torre with the support of the artist's foundation, and promoted by the government of Cuenca, is an overview of Pepe España's production, including some eighty pieces from three major periods in his career: the series *La cinta*, the sign drawings from Cuenca and Bern, and the last paintings (nine paintings).

A bilingual (English/Spanish) catalogue has been produced. It consists in an in-depth analysis of Pepe España's painting, with an extensive chronology and a selection of critical texts on this artist, including a considerable amount of material that has never published before.

There will be another exhibition of the artist's work from December 12th – February 2014 at the Museum of Graphic Arts in San Clemente.

Curator: Alfonso de la Torre

With the collaboration of the
Pepe España Foundation, Aarau CH

Friedrich Kunath

Modern Art Oxford, Oxford UK
until 17th November 2013

RAYMOND MOODY'S BLUES

Dreamer, jester, melancholic and optimist, Friedrich Kunath is an enigmatic presence in the work he creates. Modern Art Oxford presents four new paintings and a number of new sculptures will be shown alongside recent works, including the film *You Go Your Way and I'll Go Crazy* (2012). With an exhibition title that references Raymond Moody, American psychologist and best-selling author of *Life after Life* (1975), and British 1960s rock band The Moody Blues,

Kunath draws on myriad inspirations and sources in a playful discourse between melancholy and joy, which asserts the triumph of life over death, something Kunath often refers to as "sad optimism".

His paintings contain layered elements - Renaissance woodcuts, landscape engravings, still lifes, slapstick cartoons, lyrical words and phrases, anthropomorphized animals, and music iconography from the 1960s and 70s - that undulate between humour and pathos.

P.T.

Meekyoung Shin

Sumarria Lunn Gallery, London G.B.
until 8th November 2013

ARCHETYPE

Meekyoung Shin will present a new body of work in *Archetype*, a solo exhibition that considers what happens to the identity of an object when it becomes a global cultural icon. Shin is known for her colourful soap sculptures that draw on familiar objects including Ming vases and Classical, ancient Greek, sculpture. These cultural icons command almost universal recognition and attain this status by being 'translated' from their historic

and cultural origins to be presented and recontextualised in museums, texts and almost infinite reproductions around the world. Every new interpretation created by this process, no matter how subtle, changes the object. The change is rarely physical but the alteration to the fabric of the object's history and identity is no less profound.

Meekyoung Shin has previously employed soap as a metaphor for this process of cultural translation. Every time a bar of soap is used it is changed - something of the original is removed and some trace of the contact is left behind. In *Archetype* Shin develops the sculptural language that she has used to portray the malleability of her subjects, focussing not on the process of re-contextualising but on the effect these multiple readings have on the identity of the original object. In accordance with this shift in perspective Shin has created a new body of entirely black work. New subjects such as Renaissance busts and History Paintings have joined past interests, but all stand uniformly, in stark contrast to the gallery setting and to her past practice. In *Archetype* Shin reverts renowned cultural objects to their simplest form, presenting them as minimal reductions that provoke contemplation on the effects of repeated global decontextualisation.

P.R.

Friedrich Kunath, *A Dream Full of Dreams*, 2012, Mixed media on canvas

