

CREATIVE PATHS

Walking is an intentional action involving movement through space. It is the most basic and oldest means of transport, as well as a catalyst for thought and a tool for reflection and knowledge.

Walking and discovering are two concepts that often appear together. Walking can be analysed from a historical or philosophical perspective. It can be understood as a social practice, an aesthetic or spiritual experience or as a form of political activism. A path can be a physical route or a means to an end.

Creative Paths is about what moves us. It explores the relationship between art and movement, through pieces that date from the eighteenth century to the modern day. The dynamics vary depending on whether the creator, the work or the audience moves, but all share the need for this movement.

Physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing, the environment, interpersonal relations or cultural, economic and political tensions are just a few of the themes that arise from the crossroads of these two concepts.

USER'S MANUAL

Creative Paths has been designed to be experienced by walking.

The exhibition is divided into four thematic sections. They analyse the relationship between movement and creator (I and II), movement and work (III) and movement and audience (IV). Each section is identified by a colour, which is indicated on the object labels.

The works are grouped by visual affinities and content rather than by colour. Works in different sections may coexist in the same space. The inclusion in a section does not mean that a work does not feature characteristics from the other three, but rather that one is more prevalent.

This structure aims to inspire exploration and curiosity. The audience can search for works of the same colour, or can simply walk through the exhibition, like nineteenth-century Parisian *flâneurs*, allowing themselves to be surprised by the unexpected and unforeseeable.

There are no gallery floorplans. Getting lost is permitted.

Shall we go for a walk?



I. MOVING TO CREATE

This section includes works that would not exist had their creators not left their studios. This movement predates the production of the piece, be it in situ or back to the workshop. Walks, strolls and excursions thus offer the opportunity to obtain inspiration and gather working material.

The nineteenth century witnessed the development of landscape painting, which was closely related to the desire to capture nature both directly and realistically. John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner in Great Britain were the forerunners of this trend that then extended throughout the rest of Europe. In France, the Barbizon School took on Constable's ideas through artists like Théodore Rousseau and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. Their championing of outdoor painting influenced other European movements like the Italian *Macchiaioli* and, later on, Impressionism.

In Spain, Carlos de Haes pioneered venturing into the countryside to capture the natural world. His disciples and followers contributed to the visual renewal of Spanish landscape painting between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, as did the Luminism of Sorolla and the other -isms at the turn of the century.

Moving to create is a consolidated practice that is still used to this day by contemporary makers such as David Hockney and Ismael Teira.



II. CREATIVE MOVEMENTS

This section examines the importance of walking as an independent creative action. Walking is not just a resource that enables the existence of an artwork, but it becomes an integral part of the work itself. These creative movements of artists sometimes leave footprints, testimonies, or documentation about the action, but this is not always the case.

Walking as a creative action has nineteenth-century roots linked to the *flâneurs* who strolled the streets of Paris, observing city life. This spirit was transferred into the twentieth century by avant-garde artists like the Dadaists and Surrealists. Their wanderings placed an emphasis on the unconscious and individual subjectivity. Benjamín Palencia's and Maruja Mallo's walks around Madrid's suburbs were influenced by these actions.

At the end of the 1950s, concepts like drifting and psychogeography emerged to analyse the collective experience of the city and its impact on emotions. The term *walking art* appeared in Great Britain in the 60s, inspired by the works of Richard Long and Hamish Fulton. Genres like performance and happening contributed to developing and consolidating walking as an artistic practice.

Photography became an art form in the nineteenth century and its development was quickly set in motion. This technique soon combined portability and immediacy. Henri Cartier-Bresson or Helen Levitt were *flâneurs* street photographers who transformed their urban wanderings into creative movements.

III. ART ON THE MOVE

This section moves away from the artist to focus on the work. Walking is not an activity exclusive to humans although, generally speaking, art does not move. The inclusion of movement into a work is a recent phenomenon that takes ideas from the avant-gardes and optical and kinetic art from the mid-twentieth century.

Some works take over a space and alter it by changing their position, as in the case of Jeppe Hein and Clara Montoya. These pieces *walk* as they are equipped with motive autonomy, facilitated by the introduction of technology and mechanics in the field of art. This same technology allows art to move through virtual spaces and down routes that would be impossible to take in real life.

Another essential condition for a work to move is for it to have an internal time. Walking is an activity that takes place during a determined period. A painting or sculpture exist, but do not last for a while in the way that cinema and music do. For a piece to address or show movement, it must last long enough for it to contain time, as in the works by Julian Opie and Adrian Paci.

When a work moves, it offers opportunities for leisure, interaction and bewilderment that are inaccessible to an immobile object. Its presence disrupts the stable and controlled environment of the museum, establishing a new dynamic with the public.

IV. MOVING THE AUDIENCE

The other three sections address movement irrespective of the viewer. The works in this section require both movement and visitors' complicity to be fully experienced. Understanding with the mind and understanding with the body are two separate things: here, contemplation is combined with action.

Audiences' involvement in the artistic process developed during the second half of the twentieth century. The Fluxus movement arose at the end of the 1950s. It considered chance and interaction as core elements. Its approach to the creative process was fluid, open, democratic and playful. Performances and happenings placed the viewer at the centre of ephemeral and unrepeatable artistic actions.

Another way of getting the public involved is to create pathways or spaces that can be explored. Installation as an artistic genre emerged in the 1970s as a response to an interest in the use of and interactions with space. Pieces by Cristina Iglesias, Dora García and Jesús Rafael Soto are completed when people react physically and intellectually to them.

Moving the audience involves transforming a passive receiver into an active participant. This implies allowing viewers to adopt or reject such a role and accepting that their thoughts and emotions construct valid and valuable meanings. The visitor's footsteps can also trace creative paths.

AUTHORS

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER (1775–1851)

Joseph Mallord William Turner, who is often credited with giving landscape painting a status previously unknown in the United Kingdom, was one of the most famous artists of the nineteenth century. Turner was a highly skilled and prolific watercolourist. In 1789, he was admitted to the Royal Academy of Arts in London at the age of 14 and was considered a child prodigy at the time. A year later, in 1790, he exhibited for the first time at the famous London institution's summer exhibition. In 1802, he became a full member of the Academy.

By the time he entered the Royal Academy, Turner had already begun to combine (and finance) his artistic training with painting theatre sets, as well as with working in Thomas Malton's studio. Turner considered Malton, who was an architectural draughtsman and taught him the intricacies of topographical illustration, to be his "true master". These views, which combined the skills of capturing landscape and architectural elements, were often created on paper. The adolescent used many different materials and techniques, obtaining a wealth of knowledge that would shape his early style and form the basis for his later commercial projects.

Turner's skilful mastery and obvious talent for watercolour came at a time of development and splendour for the genre, which had begun a process of emancipation in the last decades of the eighteenth century to consolidate itself as an artistic medium in its own right. Watercolour was endowed with an immediacy and portability that was inaccessible to oil painting: the rapid drying of the pigments and the lightness and simplicity of the materials and supports made it a medium suitable for outdoor work. Watercolour was also seen as a pragmatic, efficient and economically attractive technique because it could easily be converted into engravings, which increased its appeal as the works could be reproduced and circulated extensively. Turner distinguished between 'finished' and 'unfinished' watercolours throughout his life. The former were either suitable for exhibitions, to be used as samples for future commercial commissions, or for personal use as art objects. The latter, on the other hand, were shown only in restricted contexts, to a limited number of people and for specific purposes.

During these formative years, and in conjunction with his topographical work, Turner began his seasonal nomadism. Although no drawings from this time survive, it is possible that Turner first visited the Bristol area in 1790, as he was not at the Royal Academy School during the same period (September and October) as the following year, when he is known to have been in this picturesque area of the West Country. In fact, the *Bristol and Malmesbury Sketchbook* from 1791 was produced during Turner's stay with the family of John Narraway, who was a close friend of Turner's father. The artist returned in the summer of 1792 on the first of his long journeys to produce watercolours and sketches. In the 1790s Turner developed a routine that he maintained for most of his life: In summer he travelled through the British (and later other foreign) countryside, sketching and painting in the open air. Then he returned to the studio in winter to continue working with the material he had collected in previous campaigns. Turner was an enthusiastic walker and an experienced traveller. He covered impressive distances on foot. As a newly elected

member of the Royal Academy, he made his first overseas trip in 1802, bringing his drawing tools and a pair of sturdy boots with him. A fishing rod was part of his equipment when he visited Cornwall in 1811 to draw illustrations for a guidebook on the south coast of England, a habit that led to his becoming intimately familiar with countless rivers. On his tour of the Rhine in 1817, he covered nearly 60 kilometres in one day to reach Mainz. His mature work was influenced by these nomadic, formative, solitary, proto-tourist practises, although from the 1830s on his technique became freer and he lost interest in detailed topographical views. Turner claimed that his aim was "to paint what I see, not what I know is there.", and he did his best to ensure that he saw as much as possible.

The Avon Gorge At Bristol with The Hot Wells House is a watercolour Turner painted when he was 17. It was painted during one of his stays with the Narraway family. Turner was nicknamed "the Prince of the Rocks" because of his habit of climbing the cliffs of the gorge to make his sketches, drawings and watercolours. The group of buildings in the centre of the composition are Hotwell's thermal baths, which no longer exist. It was a complex that tried, with modest success, to compete with the healing waters of the neighbouring city of Bath. Although the young painter has carefully captured the natural surroundings and architectural elements, he has taken a few liberties. He anchors a boat on the far right of the composition and shows another vessel with its sails fully spread. Although these two scenarios would not have been possible from a navigational point of view in such a narrow part of the river, they show the artist's imagination and ambition.

JOHN CONSTABLE (1776–1837)

John Constable's realism cannot be separated from his careful and frequent observation of nature: "When I sit down to make a sketch from nature, the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture." Drawing and painting outdoors were inherent to his artistic belief, especially from the 1810s onwards, when he set out to produce finished paintings onsite in addition to sketches and preparatory studies in oil.

Born in East Bergholt, a village on the banks of the river Stour in the county of Suffolk, East Anglia, Constable was the son of a prosperous family engaged in trading, milling and farming. Initially destined to continue the family business, his passion for art prompted him to study at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1799, moving to London – although he continued to return each summer to his native Suffolk until 1816–17 – and exhibiting there for the first time in 1802.

East Anglia is still a rural and tranquil region, eminently flat with high, imposing skies that are mirrored in the reflections on canals. Its changing light and swift clouds are an inseparable component of any landscape in the area. This environment must undoubtedly have stimulated the artist's interest in the study of atmospheric phenomena and the natural elements that surrounded him, echoing in turn the boom that empiricism and the natural sciences experienced in the transition between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For Constable, being a true "natural painter", as he called himself, meant going out to meet nature with a feeling bordering on spirituality, as he warned his pupils: "The landscape painter must walk in the fields with a humble mind. No arrogant man was ever permitted to see nature in all her beauty."

Constable, in fact, walked often. In 1814, he wrote to his future wife Maria Bicknell: "I took several beautiful walks in search of food for my pencil this summer, when I hope to do a great deal in landscape, for I find myself every day less fitted for portraits." With his friend, fellow artist and butterfly lover Thomas Stothard (1755–1834), Constable would embark on long walks around London that could start at six in the morning and continue throughout the day, with both artists stopping to sketch and, in the case of Stothard, collect specimens for his collection of lepidoptera.

Flatford Lock from the Bridge is a place connected to the family business, owners of the nearby mill of the same name, and therefore rooted not only in aesthetics but also in emotion: "Still I should paint my own places best; 'painting' is with me but another word for 'feeling', and I associate 'my careless boyhood' with all that lies on the banks of the Stour; those scenes made me a painter, and I am grateful." he declared to his childhood friend John Dunthorne in 1802. It has been said that Constable's excursions around the family residence were only far enough away for him to return home for lunch or dinner and, judging by the number of sketches and studies he made within the same radius, some credence could be given to that assertion.

This oil study is connected with a whole body of preparatory work that would come to fruition in the artist's largest canvas painted almost entirely outdoors, *Flatford Mill (Scene on a Navigable River)* (1816–7, Tate). However, its modest, intimate size, far removed from the remarkable dimensions of his later "six-footers" – including *Flatford Mill* – and its dynamic brushwork exemplify, respectively, the high portability and spontaneity commonly associated with plein-air painting.

In his old age, Constable often escaped the heat of London to paint in the then rural Hampstead. Hampstead Heath was located some six or seven kilometres north-west of central London and, although today it is fully incorporated into the urban fabric of the British capital, in the early nineteenth century it offered a refuge from the city and healthier air thanks to its fields, wooded areas and aquifers. These qualities were appealing for the artist from both a professional and personal perspective, as the environmental conditions were better for his wife, who suffered from tuberculosis.

Between 1821 and 1822, Constable made around a hundred sketches of this area, including this view of *Hampstead Heath with Pond and Bathers*, located not far from Lower Terrace and looking towards Harrow, with Branch Hill Pond in the foreground. The artist referred to his practice of capturing atmospheric effects as "skying", often noting specific weather conditions on the back of the works, as is the case of this "cloudy and stormy" afternoon of 19 July 1821 – the day of King George IV's coronation, as the artist notes on the reverse – in which the ominous portents of stormy weather failed to materialise. As he explained to his close friend Reverend Fisher in a letter of the same year: "That landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids. (...) The sky is the source of light in nature and governs everything." In this case, the sky occupies almost two thirds of the composition. Constable would come to make studies focusing only on clouds, gaining a reputation as an amateur meteorologist, although other authors suggest that his interest may have been for practical or technical rather than intellectual reasons.

The historiographical and exhibition success that John Constable has enjoyed since the mid-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century can sometimes obscure the innovative nature of his contributions to the British landscape painting of his time. His interest in the English regional environment, his inclusion of humble and anodyne architecture, his pragmatically rural themes and his studies of climatology did not find the same level of acceptance he enjoys today among his contemporaries, nor did they contribute to the dignification of landscape painting at the rate Constable himself would have wished. However, his influence spread through several generations of artists, not only English but also continental – most notably French – who were fascinated by the atmospheric effects of his compositions, helping to transform plein-air painting into the artistic phenomenon that it would become over the course of the century.

JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT (1796–1875)

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot is possibly the most influential French landscape painter of the nineteenth century. Having trained in the neoclassical style – though already adept at copying from nature – and associated with the Barbizon School at the beginning of his artistic career, Corot further developed his taste for plein-air painting during his travels in Italy and France, as well as in the Netherlands and Switzerland, in which journeys on foot played a fundamental role. One of the first artists to frequent the forest of Fontainebleau, he continued to cultivate his plein-air practice throughout the rest of his career: proof of this are the many images showing a mature Corot working or posing in front of a portable easel, dressed in his characteristic smock and covered by an umbrella. His painting box, now in the Kunstmuseum in The Hague, is another example of the highly portable materials he used for his rural forays, measuring just 31 x 37 x 30 cm.

In both cases, Corot's calling as a walker and artist originated in his youth. His mentor and guardian in Rouen, Sennegon, "shunned people but took pleasure in nature. He took his young charge with him on his walks, preferably through lonely fields away from the noise of the town. They sat on quiet banks and silently watched dusk fall and the end of the day." Later, in the 1820s, Corot walked in the company of François Édouard Bertin and Claude François Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny through the Roman countryside in search of inspiration; recommending years later, in 1840, that his friends visiting the Eternal City toured the Pincio hill, the Farnese gardens, Campo Vaccino and the banks of the Tiber. Like other artists of his generation, Corot also adopted the habit of seasonal travel to take advantage of the warmer months of the year, accumulating material with which to continue working later in the studio.

Landscape, produced on an unknown date between 1860 and 1870, is a painting representative of the artist's change of style at the end of his life. In these decades, his palette narrowed and muted tones became progressively more important. By then, Corot was already an established artist, appreciated by both critics and his peers, and anointed by popularity and commercial success. Various health problems in the late 1860s restricted the ambition of his creative travels and, although his health improved early in the following decade, from then until his death in 1875, his travels were limited exclusively to France. This canvas also exemplifies the poetic, intimate and often unidentified silver-toned landscapes that became popular with collectors at the time, to the point of eclipsing the innovations of his earlier developments.

At the same time, the works from this period are almost a swansong in the career of an artist who was to have a fundamental influence on Impressionism, a movement that would emerge in 1874, just a few years after this painting was completed. At that time, "Papa Corot" was both the great master to learn from – and to forge – and an exponent of a landscape painting that would soon be perceived as archaic and outdated. Camille Pissarro and Berthe Morisot, who were directly taught by him, always acknowledged their debt to the affable and generous painter of whom Oscar-Claude Monet would say, "There is only one master – Corot. We are nothing compared to him, nothing."

THÉODORE ROUSSEAU (1812–1867)

A key figure in understanding the history of plein-air painting and the development of landscape as an independent genre, Rousseau may also be one of the most environmentally friendly artists of the nineteenth century.

He was born in Paris and his early drawings of trees in Boulogne's forest revealed his early interest in nature as an artistic subject. A stay in the Jura Mountains in eastern France at the age of 13 made him fall in love with the forest and inspired him to devote himself to art. His first masters, who were committed to the neoclassical tradition, did not find favour with their young pupil. Instead, in the second half of the 1820s, Rousseau accompanied his relative, the landscape painter Alexandre Pau de Saint-Martin, on long walks and painting excursions in the forests of Compiègne and around Paris. During this period, Constable's naturalism, first exhibited at the Salon of 1824, caused a great stir in the French art world and inspired Rousseau, as did seventeenth-century Flemish painting, and he lost further interest in neoclassical principles for landscapes. In 1830, he abandoned his academic training and took a trip to Auvergne, in central France, where he worked outdoors. On his return to the capital, he attracted the attention of his fellow artists.

The Edge of the Forest of Clairbois was painted at a turning point in Rousseau's career. His Auvergne paintings had been favourably received by the Salon, but in 1836 his painting *La descente des vaches dans le Jura* (The Descent of the Cows in the Jura) was rejected. The Salon did not accept any further paintings by him until 1841. This setback, among other reasons, prompted the artist, nicknamed "le grand refusé" ("the great rejected one"), to move to Barbizon and revolutionise art history.

What is known as the Barbizon School, of which Rousseau was one of the main driving forces, was named after a town near the forest of Fontainebleau. It never self-identified as an official artistic movement, but the artists who lived in and around the region for about four decades – Jean François Millet, Narcisse Virgile Diaz de La Peña and Constant Troyon, among others – had similar concerns about realistically capturing the natural world and depicting a landscape without idealisation and with a soul of its own.

Even though Corot had painted at Fontainebleau before him, Rousseau is undoubtedly the artist who devoted himself most creatively and emotionally to the landscape. 1836 was the year he began spending his summers in the woods and returning to his Paris studio in winter and, in 1847, he acquired a permanent residence in Barbizon. Clairbois is another part of the forest: a plain that Rousseau explored again and again, as numerous studies and drawings show, and which also served as inspiration for his contemporaries.

During his stays in Barbizon, the artist would set off early in the morning and disappear with food supplies and his painting tools until nightfall. It is said that his work in nature went beyond mere artistic practice and was infused with aesthetic meditation in communion with the environment. His comrade Millet wrote: "The forest, silence, solitude, Rousseau loves them even more than I do. He is like a sailor on the sea. On the plain of Belle-Croix, he sits motionless for hours on a rock like a sea captain at the stern of his vessel, looking as if he were keeping watch. Instead of painting, he contemplates and lets his beloved trees slowly and deeply penetrate his soul." The artist himself described his deep respect and appreciation for trees in almost pantheistic terms: "I also listened to the voices of trees. I was amazed by their surprising movements, their shapes and even their attraction to light. They suddenly revealed to me the language of the forests. (...) I wanted to be able to talk to them and communicate with them through this other language of painting, to tell them that I had found the key to their majesty." On this small canvas, Rousseau depicts trees standing proudly, occupying a prominent position without the need for anecdote or a narrative to justify their presence. Even though the work is small and the brushstrokes are delicate, they show the dignity and monumentality characteristic of the artist and his appreciation of his surroundings.

Due to his love for the natural environment, Rousseau took action in 1861 against deforestation in Bas Bréau (near Clairbois), which was to be turned into a logging area. He was responsible for one of the first declarations on the protection of the natural environment and persuaded Napoleon III to save about a thousand hectares. Rousseau was a tireless advocate of exploring new corners of the forest in all weathers. Equipped with an easel specially designed for outdoor painting, Rousseau embodied the passion of a highly influential artist who, like Antaeus with a paintbrush, drew his creativity from his adventures in nature.

GUSTAVE COURBET (1819–1877)

Courbet is reported to have once said that he couldn't paint an angel because he had never seen one. In 1861, he wrote an open letter in which he claimed that "painting is essentially a concrete art and can only be represented by real and actual things. (...) In art, imagination is not about inventing or creating something new. It is about finding the best expression of what exists." His radical rejection of idealisation and his commitment to realism, together with his uncompromising, non-conformist and arrogant personality, led to many scandals during his career. His landscape work is far less controversial, but his bold, innovative and creative interpretations of nature were instrumental in the transition towards modernity.

Courbet was born in Ornans in the Franche-Comté region and grew up near the Swiss border and the French Alps. A vigorous nature lover who loved hunting, fishing, swimming and, of course, hiking and walking, the artist was always proud of his physical condition and took long walks on foot throughout his life. In his 1854 work *The Encounter (La Rencontre or Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet)*, the artist portrays himself as self-sufficient, carrying a collapsible easel on his back containing everything he needs to paint directly from nature. He proudly embodies the archetype of the independent, experimental artist dedicated to working outdoors. In addition to his tools of the trade, Courbet appears in the painting with a walking stick, reminiscent of the pilgrim's staff and associated with the iconography of the wandering Jew.

Walking sticks as a distinguishing feature of the artist's persona also appear in later portrayals, such as a plaster model by Louis-Joseph Leboeuf from 1860 (Musée Courbet, Ornans) and in several photographs taken in his mature years.

There is a famous anecdote about Courbet in which he rebukes another artist for taking inspiration from exotic places abroad ("Have you no country of your own, do you therefore feel compelled to borrow someone else's in order to paint?"). The truth is, however, that Courbet travelled extensively not only as an artist but also as a tourist, and many of his landscapes depict both French and foreign motifs and locations. In addition to his wanderings in France, the artist also travelled through Holland, Belgium, Germany and, as this *Swiss landscape* shows, Switzerland. Switzerland indeed played an important role in the artist's production and biography as it became his second home in his last years, when he was forced to flee France because of his participation in the Paris Commune in 1871.

Although these events had not yet taken place when Courbet painted this small oil on board, the artist had visited Switzerland frequently in his youth and was fascinated by its landscape. Switzerland had been a tourist hotspot and a sought-after source of artistic inspiration since the eighteenth century. Courbet was not like the Barbizon painters, whose desire to avoid the picturesque led them to focus on simple, everyday rural scenes. Courbet instead took a critical stance towards Romanticism, although he did not manage to fully resist its influence. His approach was different: he did not rule out these picturesque settings, but painted them using a realistic, more tangible approach that was consistent with his positivist vision of nature. Many of his views of Switzerland from the 1870s fit this description. They also indicate that Courbet was aware that there was a largely middle-class market that wished to collect renditions of these familiar places.

This work shows the artist's mastery of colour and composition. Its small size perfectly illustrates the concept of a wandering Courbet, constantly searching for creative impulses. The quiet, intimate atmosphere of the painting seems to suggest that the artist was emotionally invested in the scene, as if he had paused on one of his walks to enjoy the view and share it with the audience. Courbet boasted that he could set up his easel wherever he wanted without worrying about the methodical selection of his subjects. He said this was because he did not strive for dramatic or sublime effects, but for verisimilitude, i.e. the evocation of physical contact with nature. His revolutionary, realistic approach to landscape painting and subsequent legacy offer a picture of Courbet that transcends his justified fame as the "enfant terrible" of nineteenth-century French painting.

HENRI-JOSEPH HARPIGNIES (1819–1916)

Hailed as the "Michelangelo of trees and quiet fields" by the writer Anatole France, Henri-Joseph Harpignies was an artist whose long career witnessed the advent of the main nineteenth-century French pictorial movements, such as the Barbizon School, Realism, Romanticism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, as well as the first avant-garde movements.

Always reluctant to openly affiliate himself with any artistic trend and eternally loyal to landscape painting, Harpignies began to devote himself professionally to painting almost in his thirties and despite his family's resistance. His travels initially in France, later in Belgium and Germany, but above all in Italy –

where he lived on several occasions – left a deep impression and strengthened his pictorial vocation.

In the early 1850s, Harpignies moved to the forest of Fontainebleau and came into contact with several members of the Barbizon School, such as Théodore Rousseau, Narcisse-Virgile Diaz de La Peña and Jean-François Millet. An assiduous practitioner and staunch advocate of plein-air painting, like them, he was often linked to this group of artists given his profession of a similar or, at the very least, adjacent artistic belief. Harpignies, however, continually maintained his independence, declaring "No! No! No! It is Rome that marked me above all else." Rome and the realism of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, one of his fellow residents in Italy in the 1860s, with whom he formed a lasting and deep friendship until Corot's death in 1875. Unsurprisingly, Corot's realistic approach to nature led Harpignies to experiment with capturing the changing seasons and the different effects of light during the day and night, taking advantage of the months of mild weather to make sketches from nature.

In 1869, Harpignies got lost in the forest of Tronçais, in the Auvergne region, while on a hunting trip as a guest of the father of one of his pupils, Jeanne Rongier. The mishap forced him to make a detour and this accidental walk led him to discover the castles of Creux, de la Roche and Chateloy, as well as the road that runs parallel to the river Aumance between Vallon and Hérisson. The artist was so impressed by the charm of the area that during the following decade he spent his summers in the little village of Hérisson, exploring and painting its many corners, such as these *Ruins du château d'Hérisson* of 1871, and attracting a small group of young landscape painters who ended up being named after the village where they spent their summers.

Landscape, on the other hand, is a work that has not been clearly dated – the date has been interpreted as 1886 or 1896 – which presents a view of an unidentified path. It is a mature painting, executed at a time when Harpignies was already accumulating a wide range of awards, from several medals at the Paris Salon and a second-place medal at the 1878 World's Fair to the title of Officer of the Legion of Honour, which he received in 1883. His undeniable mastery of drawing, of composition – he always started with the sky – and of colour – his palette was invariably respectful of the eight pigments learned from his master, Jean Achard – seem to echo the advice the artist himself gave his pupils on their country outings: "Two hours spent in nature is an hour and three quarters to draw and a quarter of an hour to paint."

CARLOS DE HAES (1826–1898)

Carlos de Haes was responsible for a revolution in landscape painting in Spain. When he passed the competitive examination to be the head of landscape painting at the San Fernando Royal Academy in 1857, de Haes introduced a new aesthetic – realism – and, most importantly, a new methodology, painting in the open air. He knew about these new developments in European art from the five years he had spent training in his native Belgium, which he had been separated from since childhood by his family moving to Malaga. His arrival in Madrid and academic position until nearly the end of the century brought a breath of fresh air to a very stuffy environment. The position of head of landscape painting had only been created the previous decade, in 1844, which was relatively late compared to other countries, and there was a correlation between this delay and the academic mentality in Spain at the time. Despite the outstanding work of

de Haes' predecessor in the position, the romantic Jenaro Pérez Villaamil, landscape painting was considered a minor genre compared to history painting, with its moral and educational virtues. The predominant educational method at the time was based on copying engravings and prints to extract motifs that could be used to compose imaginary landscapes.

Carlos de Haes had trained in the late-romantic tradition. He was accustomed to creating his finished pieces - large canvases for the market and salons - in his workshop. But he was also very prolific in creating sketches and notes outdoors. And it is these small-scale works - which he conceived more as a medium than as an end in themselves - that reveal his most modern side. He made them on small pieces of canvas or paper which he cut to fit the size of his case, and then attached to more stable frames when he returned to his studio. They were executed quickly, with short, synthetic brushstrokes, never taking more than a couple of hours. He used these sketches as references for creating carefully and painstakingly elaborated paintings, often introducing numerous variations.

De Haes passed on this methodology to his students, who were the first generations of painters to fully embrace the plein-air approach. Over the four decades of his teaching activity, he built up a group of students and former students with whom he went on regular painting trips, ranging from the surroundings of Madrid (areas seldom visited by residents of the capital at the time) to longer trips around the Peninsula and to other European countries. During these journeys he carefully observed the changing nature of the agrarian landscape and the variations in the weather and light conditions. He encouraged his followers to do the same. His attention to botanical and geological motifs was also innovative, as these had previously usually only been treated generically in Spanish painting. De Haes argued that landscape painters needed to go beyond technical training to acquire scientific knowledge of these disciplines. For example, the pioneering study of the Cantabrian mountain range by the mining engineer and geologist Casiano de Prado was a major influence on his decision to explore the area. He first visited the area in 1871 and returned several times, with the most important and extensive trip being in the summer of 1874, accompanied by his students Aureliano de Beruete and José de Entrala. The many studies produced during this expedition include *Picos de Europa*, painted in an area close to the Canal de Mancorbo (the subject of one of his masterpieces, which is now in the Prado collection).

It is very likely that *Mountain landscape* was painted during the same trip. However, the lack of recognisable landmarks for reference has led to some doubt among experts. José Luís Díez dates the work to between 1872 and 1875, based on analysis of its style, while Carmen Pena and Eduardo Martínez de Pisón argue that it could represent the road to Liébana, with the Ándara massif in the background, based on the foggy atmosphere, which is very typical of Cantabria, and the geological motifs featured.

Both of these studies by de Haes are the result of a journey into an area of high mountains that is very difficult to access. Comparing them provides a good example of de Haes' treatment of the differing weather conditions.

SERAFÍN AVENDAÑO (1838-1916)

Serafín Avendaño, from Vigo, studied at the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in the 1850s. His training, which was heav-

ily influenced by romanticism, was overseen by Antonio María Esquivel and, in particular, Jenaro Pérez Villaamil, the first head of landscape painting at the School. When Pérez Villaamil died, he was replaced by Carlos de Haes. Avendaño, who was still in Madrid, was influenced by the innovations introduced by the Belgian master, although he never studied under him. The most decisive factor in Avendaño's career came in 1861 with the award of a scholarship in Rome by the San Fernando Royal Academy. Although the painter had already had some experience of painting in the open air in Madrid and earlier visits to Europe and the United States, his more experimental side really began to flourish in Italy.

We know he was in Genoa in 1863, although he would not set up home there until 1866. This was the year when the *Scuola dei Grigi* (The School of Greys) began to emerge. This grouping formed around the classes of Professor Tammam Luxoro at the Accademia Ligustica di Belle Arti in Genoa, who was a pioneer in introducing the ideas of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and Charles-François Daubigny into the region. His students Ernesto Rayper and Alfredo de Andrade began organising painting expeditions to the hills of Carcare, a small town around 50 kilometres from Genoa, and to explore the Bormida river as it passed through the area. They were soon joined by other artists, of whom Avendaño was one of the first. The group's name was due to its rejection of the use of black and white, and its preference for experimenting with intermediate tones in an attempt to capture light and the tonal gradations it produces in the landscape.

Another group was forming in neighbouring Piedmont at about the same time around the landscape painter Carlo Pittara, who had been in Paris and knew the painters of the Barbizon School. Like the French group, he chose a wooded area for his work, the outskirts of the town of Rivara, close to Turin. The Rivara School was the most active artistic group in Piedmont at the time, and included architects, archaeologists, musicians and other intellectuals, though its core comprised landscape painters who wanted to break with academic rules and introduce realism and fidelity to nature. The artists who joined Pittara and his associates in their excursions included four "Grigi" painters, Ernesto Rayper, Alberto Issel, Serafín Avendaño and Alfredo de Andrade, who were very active members of the group over the next two decades.

The two schools of which Serafín Avendaño was a member were active at the same time as similar mould-breaking experiences in other parts of the country, such as the *Scuola di Resina* in Naples and the *Macchiaioli* around Florence, who were the more successful. This generation of artists, who built up a network of contacts and influences, was responsible for moving on from the academic formulas and influence of romantic landscape painting, which had become clichéd and out of date by the second half of the 19th century. Avendaño stayed in Italy until almost the end of the century and was a leading member of this revolution. However, he never lost contact with Spain, which he visited frequently. He was a very popular painter in his native country, where he took part in numerous artistic salons.

Autumn Landscape is a fine example of Avendaño's technical expertise. He exploits the slanting light of the sun bathing the side of a hill to arrange his composition around a powerful diagonal. However, the most interesting feature of this painting is the minute detail in which he has caught the full range of greens and ochres. This work dates from between 1863 and 1866, when the artist was a member of the two experimental groupings in north-west Italy. While it is difficult to determine where it was

painted, the traces of these experiences and his modernising zeal become apparent in the canvas.

AURELIANO DE BERUETE (1845-1912)

Aureliano de Beruete's artistic career developed in parallel with the main intellectual trends in Spain at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries. He is often considered one of the leading exponents of the aesthetic ideas of the Generation of '98 and the intellectual and political movement known as Regenerationism.

Beruete came from an aristocratic background and his comfortable financial position enabled him to abandon a career in law to dedicate himself to painting. He was also an art critic and historian, with his most important work being a monograph on Velázquez. He was a judge at art exhibitions and an occasional dealer. In addition to art, he was also a prominent intellectual and was active in the most important movements of his day. Beruete was a committed liberal and was one of the founding members of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (Free Education Institution), the ideology of which is embodied in his work. He painted with a scientific and educational outlook, seeking to promote the landscapes of Spain.

Beruete studied at the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts from 1874, where he was a student of Carlos de Haes. He remained close to his teacher after his student years and accompanied him on painting trips in Spain and abroad until the death of de Haes. Beruete's wealth enabled him to travel constantly throughout his life, visiting galleries around Europe and embarking on very ambitious projects. For example, he was the only Spanish painter of his generation other than Martín Rico to paint the Alps.

In 1878, he travelled to Paris, where he came into contact with the Barbizon School. This led him to make the definitive leap to plein-air painting, producing his entire finished pictures out of doors, rather than just making sketches and notes as he had done with de Haes.

Beruete painted *La Ribera de Vigo* (The Shore at Vigo) two years after his visit to Paris. This work is a good example of his painting during this next period. It is part of a series of paintings Beruete created during summer trips to Galicia from 1880 to 1884. In addition to the influence of French painting, we can also recognise the influence of Martín Rico, who he had met in Paris. This made his palette more luminous and richer in greys and ochres than it had been during his San Fernando Royal Academy period. Creating the work in the open air did not hamper Beruete in producing a very precise academic exercise, choosing a viewpoint in which the very clear vanishing points converge in the central part of the canvas. The Ribera or Berbés neighbourhood was a fishing community well suited to folkloric representation. It features in works by painters such as Francisco Pradilla and Juan Martínez Abadés, showing fish being sold, the collecting of seaweed and other coastal activities. Here, Beruete avoids these clichés. Although his painting features human figures and the tools of their trade (such as boats and nets), his work remains faithful to the parameters of the landscape genre, being much more interested in capturing the quality of the light.

View of the Sierra de Guadarrama from El Plantío is a very different example of Beruete's art. In the twenty years since his

Galician work, he had abandoned all academic conventions and the realist aesthetic he had been raised in. By the start of the twentieth century, his work had become much more experimental, with freer brushstrokes, a composition in strips and a much more audacious colour scheme. It was painted at Plantío de los Infantes, a property his wife inherited that the painter often visited. The Sierra de Guadarrama mountains had been painted by de Haes and his disciples and were subsequently promoted from an intellectual perspective by the Institución Libre de Enseñanza. These mountains had particular significance for Beruete as they feature as a backdrop in a number of works by Velázquez, one of the painters he most admired. Beruete's use of violet hues in the mountain chain is a tribute to the great Baroque master. Experimentation was a constant theme in Beruete's work until the end of his life, producing his riskiest work in his last decade.

SANTIAGO RUSIÑOL (1849-1931)

Santiago Rusiñol was one of the major figures in Catalan art at the end of the nineteenth century. In addition to painting, he was also a writer and theorist of modernism. This movement, with traits similar to Art Nouveau and Jugendstil, aimed to be the artistic expression of post-Renaixença Catalonia, which was enjoying an economic boom and period of cultural splendour.

Rusiñol was the main promoter of Sitges as the nerve centre of modernism, exceeded in importance only by Barcelona. Rusiñol attempted to achieve this through Cau Ferrat, two contiguous fishermen's cottages that he bought and transformed into his workshop, and the "Festes Modernistes", five festivals he organised in the town in the 1890s. These festivals celebrated contemporary culture, featuring a wide range of artistic, literary and festive activities, bringing together intellectuals and artists from Catalonia, Spain and abroad.

We can distinguish three stages in Rusiñol's painting. The first is characterised by a realist style influenced by the Olot School. The next stage was influenced by his periods in Paris (the first of which was in 1889), the militancy of modernist ideology and a degree of group consciousness with Ramón Casas and Enric Clarasó, with whom he exhibited at the Parés Gallery in Barcelona several times, protected and promoted by the critic Ramón Casellas. During this second period, the impressionist technique he had adopted in France was evolving, incorporating symbolist traits. This culminated in the final phase, when gardens painted in the open air became the central theme of his work, adding a significant subjective dimension to the reproduction of place.

Gerona landscape belongs to the first phase in Rusiñol's career. At the time, he was managing his family's textile factory so he could only paint in his spare time. This changed with the death of his grandfather at the end of the 1880s, when the painter left the business in the hands of his brother and separated himself from his family. When he created this work, he had already taken classes in the workshop of Tomás Moragás and had begun to move in the commercial circuit in Barcelona. Here he met Joaquim Vayreda, the founder of the Olot School, which was the first major group of Catalan landscape artists committed to the realism of the Barbizon School. Rusiñol and his close friend Ramón Casas travelled to this area to paint, attracted by the presence of these other artists. However, being from a younger generation, both painters began to develop an interest in naturalism, which distinguished them from their predecessors. This current had emerged in literature as an evolution of the realist approach,

with Émile Zola being its greatest exponent. This trend was reflected in the visual arts, with Jules Bastien-Lepage as one of the leading figures. There were early examples of this in Catalonia in the work of Joan Planella. This was a more pessimistic aesthetic, which introduced notions such as biological and social determinism, and shifted the focus to the working class and the impoverished rural world.

Responding to this influence, in the 1880s Rusiñol painted interiors of industrial factories and rural scenes, such as the one displayed here: an area on the outskirts of the city where nothing is beautiful and the cloudy sky casts an air of melancholy, enabling us to sense the artist's feelings.

Works by Rusiñol and Casas from this period were displayed at the Parés Gallery in 1890. However, they were poorly received by the press, which described them as "Zola-esque" and "vulgar", accusing the painters of having failed to understand the naturalist creed. This should come as no surprise, as the public who consumed this type of art was an expanding middle class seeking painting with an air of sophistication to decorate their homes, for whom this aesthetic must have seemed far too radical.

JAIME MORERA (1854-1927)

Jaime Morera was one of the closest friends of Carlos de Haes, and the disciple whose painting remained closest to that of his teacher. Their personal relationship was so close that de Haes named Morera as his executor, making him responsible for managing his artistic legacy and distributing it among various museums.

Originally from Catalonia, Morera spent most of his life in Madrid, and it was the capital's artistic and intellectual activity that left the biggest mark on him. His political ideology was close to the Regenerationism that emerged in the 1880s, advocating the modernisation of Spain. However, he was very conservative in artistic matters. This is clearly shown in his memoirs, where he states his rejection of modern painting (meaning Impressionism) and its experimentation with colour, which he labelled as being affected. His work followed a path close to the realist tradition, in tune with a new romantic wave that enjoyed great critical and commercial success in the second half of the nineteenth century. His paintings featured a resurgence of concepts such as the sublime.

It should, therefore, be no surprise that he was attracted to landscapes of high mountains and extreme weather conditions. The Sierra del Guadarrama mountains were an enormous source of inspiration for Morera. He went much further in his exhaustive explorations than any of the other painters who frequented the mountains, visiting the most remote and rugged areas. This appreciation of the Sierra was first started by de Haes and his disciples, who often went there to paint and who influenced - with Aureliano de Beruete as the mediator - the attention Francisco Giner de los Ríos and his colleagues at the Institución Libre de Enseñanza dedicated to the area. In 1883, this group started making "educational excursions" to the area, anticipating the creation of the Guadarrama Study Society in 1886. This intellectual context gave Morera - who had made his first visits to the Sierra as a student of de Haes - fresh impetus. From 1890 to the early years of the twentieth century, he undertook the most ambitious campaign of his career, visiting the Sierra frequently, particularly in winter. His recollections of these years are collected in a memoir he eloquently entitled *In the Sierra del*

Guadarrama. Ramblings about memories of years of painting in the snow, although this was not published until 1927, shortly before his death.

Puerto de la Morcuera. Sierra del Guadarrama belongs to this cycle. He uses a very restricted palette of whites, greys and ochres, and applies sharp contrasts of light to accentuate the resplendent whiteness of the snow. The tiny human figure emphasises the grandeur of the natural scene and adds a "costumbrist" touch, which was very fashionable at the time and reflects the interest in the traditional ways of life of rural people that were beginning to disappear at the time due to the advance of the industrial revolution. Morera often used this technique of including small figures in his compositions. This was a legacy of classical Roman landscapes that the artist had discovered first hand in the 1870s as part of the first cohort of graduates of the recently opened Spanish Royal Academy in Rome.

In 1900, he married María Felisa Alday y Cortina, who he had met in Algorta, Getxo when he was looking after de Haes during his final days. He now started to alternate spending winters in Madrid with summers in this part of the Basque country painting the Cantabrian coast. *Marina* belongs to this stage, although its date is unknown. This scene is very different to his previous work, but the pictorial treatment is similar: once again, this is an exercise in academic virtuosity using a very restricted palette, with a small and humble human figure anchoring the composition.

In 1912, following his participation in the Exhibition of Lleida artists, Morera started to become more involved with his native city, with a new objective. In the subsequent years he became one of the driving forces behind the creation of a local gallery, to which he donated much of his collection and his own work, and which bears his name in recognition.

MANUEL RAMOS ARTAL (1855-C.1916)

We know very little about the biography of Manuel Ramos Artal. We know he was born in Madrid in 1855. Details of his death are much less clear, with the approximate date being 1916. However, the span of his life largely reflects the trajectory of plein-air painting in Spain, from being a radical, mould-breaking approach in the mid nineteenth century to being just one more element in the artist's toolbox.

Ramos Artal was a disciple of Carlos de Haes at the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts. When he finished studying, he travelled abroad to expand his artistic knowledge and life experience. He visited Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and Portugal - the usual destinations among others of his generation. However, he never spent long in any of these countries, as he had no institutional financial support. In Spain, he made many longer journeys, painting landscapes in Galicia, Asturias, Segovia, Toledo and around Madrid, among other places. He submitted works to national exhibitions in 1876, 1878 and 1881, and to various regional exhibitions, winning some minor awards. For example, his drawing *Monastery of San Benito de Lérez* was awarded the bronze medal at the 1880 Pontevedra exhibition.

He was most active in exhibiting his work during the 1880s, with pieces displayed at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid, the exhibition hall of the *El Globo* newspaper and the Association of Writers and Artists of Madrid, where he won an award in 1885.

His greatest achievements were a third place at the 1884 National Exhibition and a certificate of honour at the 1887 National Exhibition.

At this time, Artal was making something of a social splash as a member of Madrid's art scene, appearing in caricatures and newspaper articles. He joined expeditions organised by Jaime Morera and struck up friendships with other painters, such as Juan Martínez Abadés and Nemesio Lavilla from Asturias, Pedro Venancio Gassis y Minondo from the Basque Country, and Cristóbal Rojas from Venezuela.

We know that he was in San Sebastian at the end of the decade because he submitted works to the 1889 Universal Exhibition in Paris and the 1890 National Fine Art Exhibition from there. His participation in competitions then became less frequent, although he never disappeared entirely from the national circuit. Perhaps this decrease in activity was related to him obtaining a post as an assistant professor of artistic drawing at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in Madrid, which gave him greater financial security. He was also working for journals and newspapers such as *Blanco y negro* and *La ilustración gallega y asturiana*.

In *Asturian landscape*, Artal presents a type of scene that would be very successful in regionalist painting, particularly in the following century. The painting combines the characteristic landscape of the province - all rainy climate and mountain backdrops - with traditional architecture. The traditional house and *hórreo* (grain store) form the main elements of the small farm. A human presence is suggested, though never shown, through its lasting effects on the landscape - the buildings, road and fallow land - and transitory elements, such as the clothes hanging out to dry, which also give the composition of grey, brown and green tones its sole flashes of bright colour.

Manuel Ramos Artal is one of de Haes' disciples who has received little attention in subsequent art history. He was a prolific but discrete painter. Although his work was of reasonable quality, it was never very innovative. He represents the type of artist who manages to make a career out of painting without already possessing or accumulating a fortune. He made a living from competitions, salons and working with newspapers and magazines until he achieved a teaching post.

I MACCHIAIOLI

The *Macchiaioli* were the most successful and influential of the groups of artists that proliferated in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century. The roots of the group can be traced back to 1855, when artists from Tuscany and other regions began meeting in the Caffè Michelangiolo in Florence. This was a generation born between the 1820s and the early 1840s that had taken part, or would take part, in the Italian wars of independence and unification. It was strongly politically committed to the new nation emerging from the *Risorgimento* movement. From an artistic perspective, the group shared a rejection of academic rules and a desire to move on from the idioms inherited from romanticism, which no longer reflected their concerns. The term *Macchiaioli* ("patch-makers") was used for the first time in 1861 in a hostile review in the *Gazzetta del Popolo* newspaper, referring to their use of patches of colour to create their works, accentuating contrasts in the light and often not defining the outlines of their figures, using techniques such as *sfumato*. The result of this approach is an impasto effect in which everything

represented in the painting has great solidity.

Some of the artists in this movement, such as Altamura and Serafino di Tivoli, visited the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1855. They were very enthusiastic about the works of the Barbizon School and Courbet, which were well represented, and brought their ideas back to Florence, where painters such as Odoardo Borrani and Telemaco Signorini had started holding meetings at which they shared their artistic ideals and experiences. The following year, the critic Diego Martelli joined these meetings at the Caffè Michelangiolo, becoming the main theorist and intellectual leader of the group. This gestation was followed by a period of creative splendour in the 1860s. Their great unveiling to the public took place in 1861, at the National Fine Arts Exhibition held in Florence to celebrate the recent unification of Italy. In 1861, Diego Martelli inherited a property in Castiglioncello in Tuscany. This became an important location for landscape painting for the group, where group members such as Giuseppe Abbati, Odoardo Borrani and Giovanni Fattori spent long periods painting in the open air.

Giuseppe Abbati painted *The reefs of Castiglioncello* between 1862 and 1864. He had joined the *Macchiaioli* in the historic year of 1861, when he returned from Garibaldi's Expedition of the Thousand, also called the Expedition of the Red Shirts. The coastal landscape of Castiglioncello features in several of his paintings. However, the focus on the rocks rather than on the body of water in this work was a very modern viewpoint. This is consistent with Courbet's approach, highlighting landscape motifs that had played a secondary role in the history of Western art.

The two views painted by Vincenzo Cabianca are further witness to the importance of Castiglioncello as a reference point for these artists. Cabianca, who had been attending gatherings of the group since it started in the 1850s, continued to return to Castiglioncello until as late as the 1890s, by which time the *Macchiaioli* had dispersed.

Piagentina, a rural area outside the walls to the south of Florence, was as important as Castiglioncello. During the Castiglioncello years, Silvestro Lega set up a workshop in Piagentina that attracted the group's attention. The *Visit to the country house* is one of multiple versions of this same subject. The horizontal board on which it is painted was one of the favoured formats for the *Macchiaioli*, as we can also see in one of the examples by Cabianca. Whether deliberately cut in this way or sometimes just making use of the lids of cigar boxes, the choice was aesthetic rather than practical, serving to accentuate the vastness of the landscape. The similarity of this format to Mediaeval and Renaissance predellas, and the solidity of the figures, has led some critics to see evocations of quattrocentista painting, seeking a genealogy stretching back to this other artistic group that was native to Florence.

Telemaco Signorini explored the banks of the Arno exhaustively during the time he was most closely associated with Piagentina. *On the Arno floodplain* is a work reflecting the painter's fascination with the light and humidity of the area, capturing the influence of the Barbizon School with great lyricism.

In the years following this painting, the *Macchiaioli* started to slowly break up as a group. A collective exhibition planned for 1865 was never held due to differences of opinion among the members. Caffè Michelangiolo closed the following year. In an attempt to maintain some cohesion, Signorini launched the week-

ly journal *Gazzettino delle Arti del Disegno*, assisted by Diego Martelli. Unfortunately, this only lasted for one year. Nevertheless, the activity of its members continued in coordinated styles consistent with what they experienced during these years until as late as the 1880s.

DARÍO DE REGOYOS (1857-1913)

Darío de Regoyos was one of the most original and versatile painters of his generation. Originally from Asturias, he lived in numerous places throughout his life, including a lengthy period in Belgium, where he came into contact with European modernism, and a later period in the Basque Country, where he would be a driving force in the local art scene. He provides a key link between the international avant-garde and Spanish painting.

After studying under Carlos de Haes for two years, Regoyos moved to Brussels, where he enrolled in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. At the Royal Academy he studied under Haes' old teacher, Joseph Quinaux, who was still active and would be a major influence during his formative years. Quinaux encouraged the young Regoyos to let himself be led by his curiosity about nature and painting in the open air. This way of painting was well established in Belgium at the time, due to the influence of French artists such as the Barbizon School and its Belgian counterpart, the Tervueren School.

Regoyos threw himself into the most modern intellectual and artistic groups in Brussels from the moment that he arrived. Through his friends the violinist Enrique Fernández Arbós (who invited him to Belgium for his first visit) and Isaac Albéniz, he began to attend meetings organised by the patron of the arts Edmond Picard, which were a hotbed of artists, musicians and writers. He soon joined the avant-garde and anti-academic *L'Essor* group, which was replaced by the even more radical *Les XX* and finally *La Libre Esthétique* groups, both of which he also joined. The annual exhibitions held by these groups included the most mould-breaking artists, such as the Belgian members (including James Ensor, Theo van Rysselberghe and Ferdinand Khnopff) and guests from other countries (Van Gogh, Monet, Rodin and many others). These experiences spurred Regoyos to cultivate a series of friendships that would influence him and enable him to incorporate the major avant-garde trends of the time into his art, such as symbolism, pointillism (of which he was the only Spanish exponent) and impressionism.

Regoyos was a great traveller throughout his life. At this time he started to develop a particular affinity for the Basque Country, through his frequent visits while he was still living in Brussels. He later made his home in the region, moving from one place to another and making countless excursions and trips. This was followed by a final period in Barcelona, where he had to move for health reasons.

He was fascinated by the Basque landscape and its gentle tonal transitions, changeable weather and atmospheric conditions. He painted the medieval church of San Juan Bautista in the Basque town of Lezo frequently. This type of monumental and picturesque Spanish scene was very popular in the European art market at the time, but this does not mean that Regoyos' work was by any means conventional. We know that he produced a series of at least seven oil paintings capturing different weather and light conditions throughout the day, as Monet had done a few years earlier with the cathedral at Rouen.

The two paintings from 1902 - *Leaving the factory* and *The passing of the train* - are examples of his curiosity and positive attitude to the modernisation of Spain and the new developments introduced by the industrial revolution. These works offer an interesting contrast with the famous Regoyos of *La España Negra (The Black Spain)*, a book created with the poet Emil Verhaeren that depicted Spain as backward and sometimes brutal. The groups of women in mourning attending mass in this series give way to workers who have left their homes for work in *Leaving the factory*. He presents a very amiable vision of this new reality. As is often the case with Regoyos, the human figures are seen from a distance, as part of the landscape, with attention being placed on the group as a whole. The protagonists become pictorial motifs, traversing the large diagonal of the road, lending colour and rhythm to the work, almost as if it were a musical composition. But Regoyos never forgot their humanity, bringing them together in small groups of two or three, linking arms in a warm gesture of comradeship.

Trains - the symbol par excellence of the industrial revolution - were one of the artist's favourite themes. *The passing of the train* shows a train irrupting into a rural area, emphasising the contrast between two opposing worlds that were starting to overlap during this historic period. This theme also provided material for a stylistic exercise, in which he recreated the effects of steam in a cloudy and damp landscape. The composition, which omits the locomotive and the end of the mass formed by the cloud of steam gives us an idea of the thirst for modernity and originality in Regoyos' gaze.

ELISEO MEIFRÉN (1859-1940)

Although less well-known today than his modernist contemporaries, Eliseo Meifrén was a notable figure in the history of Catalan landscape painting. His artistic career represents an inter-generational bridge between the realism in which he was trained and impressionism. He enjoyed critical acceptance and international commercial success throughout his life.

Meifrén studied at the La Llotja school in Barcelona under Antonio Caba and Ramón Martí Alsina. The latter, the leading exponent of realism in Catalonia, was highly influential on Meifrén during this early period, and took him on his first open-air painting expeditions. However, Meifrén did not embrace the technique fully until he visited Paris in 1879. This visit coincided with the fourth impressionist exhibition, when this movement was particularly buoyant. Meifrén was impressed with its creative freedom, but it would take him another decade to adopt a similar style. In the meantime, he continued painting in a more conservative style reminiscent of the Barbizon School.

The following year, he met a group of Catalan painters in Italy who had been close to Mariano Fortuny and were continuing the luminist approach of his later years. One of these was Arcadio Mas. He would be one of the founders of the Luminist School of Sitges (the First School of Sitges, prior to the arrival of Rusiñol). He also became familiar with the Olot School in a visit to the town during his honeymoon with Dolores Pajarín in 1882, immediately before heading to Paris again. These alternating local and international influences are reflected in a gradual lightening of his painting and freer brush strokes. By the 1890s, his work had become completely impressionist, with no remaining traces of academic conventionalism. Together with Rusiñol and Casas, who he met in Montmartre when they were staying in Paris in the late 1880s and early 1890s, he was responsible for introducing

Impressionism into Catalonia. However, unlike them, he was not interested in symbolism. His work subsequently continued along the same lines, always focused on landscape painting.

Despite his stylistic independence, during the 1890s he was involved in Rusiñol's Modernist Fiestas in Sitges, a town they had discovered together in 1891 when returning from a visit to the Víctor Balaguer Gallery in Vilanova i la Geltrú. In the 1890s, he started to acquire an international profile, with exhibitions in the Americas and Europe, and received a number of major awards.

The main protagonist in his paintings was the sea: he even painted a self-portrait of himself in a boat entitled *Mi estudio (My studio)*. The Mediterranean coast was the place he most frequently chose to paint, in both Catalonia and Mallorca. However, the Atlantic also sometimes featured, particularly during the period he spent in the Canary Islands, where he was a significant influence on younger artists such as Néstor Martín Fernández de la Torre and Juan Rodríguez Botas.

Lacustrine landscape is a delicate example of Eliseo Meifrén's work in his artistic maturity. It is an atmospheric study in which he delights in recreating the effects of the clouds, the smoke and the reflections on the water, and the materiality of the mass of land in the foreground and the blue hues of the mountains in the background. The painting is undated but seems to have been painted in the early twentieth century, given the confidence of his style and his decidedly impressionistic brushwork and colour palette.

Houses on the beach is a work from late in the artist's life, in which he pays homage to the light of the Catalan coast on a clear day. The seaside location has been the subject of debate but is likely to be Cadaqués, with which the artist had been closely connected since the 1880s. In 1912, a year after being declared an adopted son of the town by its people, Meifrén bought a fisherman's cottage in which he stayed frequently during his later years, alternating with his residence in Mallorca.

JOAQUÍN SOROLLA (1863-1923)

Joaquín Sorolla was one of the most commercially successful Spanish artists during his lifetime. His popularity continues to this day, and he is one of the best-known Spanish painters outside Spain.

Sorolla was the perfect incarnation of Baudelaire's "painter of modern life", a *flâneur* who avidly collected everything around him in his everyday life, his walks and his travels around Spain, Europe and America. While his large-scale oil paintings achieved international fame and success, there is a less well-known side to Sorolla. He was also an intimate painter who paid careful attention to his surroundings. Mauricio López-Roberts described him as a painter who wanders around hunting impressions. Sorolla took copious notes about everything around him using the quickest formats available to him, such as sketching, photography and sketches in oil. The latter were also known as "stains" or "colour notes", which he made on small wooden boards or pieces of cardboard that he could easily carry in his case with his paints. In his lifetime he painted some 2,000 sketches in the open air, which he used as drafts for subsequent canvases and for his most radical experimentation.

Plein-air painting was a technique he constantly applied in his work from his student days at the Valencia School of Fine Arts. By the end of the 1870s, this way of painting was sufficiently

widespread in Spain to be included in the academic curriculum (outside the San Fernando Royal Academy) alongside more traditional methodologies, such as copying old masters in the Prado.

When he moved to Madrid, he came into contact with the plein-air painters grouped around de Haes. Although he never went on any of their painting expeditions, he was friendly with some of them, particularly Aureliano de Beruete, to whom he dedicated an exhibition in his own workshop after he died. Unlike the de Haes group, Sorolla had a preference for the human figure, urban areas and places close to population centres. Rather than trips to the high mountains and other inhospitable areas, he preferred to explore more accessible areas during his "summer holiday" travels, which was a very modern concept then in vogue among the upper classes following the fashion introduced by Queen Isabel II for sea bathing. Sorolla came from a humble background but achieved a rapid social rise through his marriage to Clotilde García del Castillo and, in particular, his enormous professional success. He was dedicated to cultivating the elegant customs that proclaimed his status.

After bathing. Asturias dates from Sorolla's third visit to the Principality. The characteristic light and colours of the Cantabrian coast and the cliffs of the beach at San Antonio del Mar presented an interesting challenge for an artist from Valencia used to the Mediterranean, a very different sea. His modern treatment of landscape is completed with a monumental female figure with classical traits in her posture and dress, revealing the artist's deep knowledge of art history. The painting was displayed two years later at the Georges Petit Gallery in the first show dedicated to the artist in Paris, which was a landmark in the painter's career.

Bathing. Valencia beach is an example of Sorolla's more popular side. It was painted the year after his visit to Asturias, as he "spent his summer holidays" in his native city. Sorolla was drawn to portraying the world of children, whether his own or groups of anonymous children, as in this case. Compared to the previous work, which was much more precise, here a fleeting instant is executed rapidly, seeking to capture the atmosphere, light and changing nature of the sea. The artist's interest is drawn to the mass of people and movement, aspects that fascinated Sorolla and that were the subject of many of his compositions.

Galician washerwomen offers an image in which a group of people is again the protagonist. In this case the figures are working-class women washing clothes on the shore, which was traditionally women's work done in collective washing facilities before running water was piped to houses. Sorolla painted this study in Vilagarcía de Arousa, where he was staying while he painted *La Romería* to represent Galicia in the *Vision of Spain* series commissioned by the Hispanic Society of New York, which would be one of the most monumental series of paintings in his career. This sketch is an example of his relationship with the region, of which he said, "I believe Galicia is the most difficult region to paint, due to its variety and the ease with which everything changes".

HERMENEGILDO ANGLADA CAMARASA (1871-1959)

Hermenegildo Anglada Camarasa was an artist from Barcelona who was very successful in Paris at the turn of the century. Following an initial formative period in Catalonia where he came into contact with modernism, he moved to Paris in 1894 and

completed his artistic education at the prestigious Académie Julian. When he arrived in Paris, he discovered Post-Impressionism and the work of artists such as Les Nabis, Toulouse-Lautrec and Gustave Moreau. He quickly tuned into the decadent aesthetic that was then triumphing in art and literature. His work captures the nocturnal life of Paris, bathed in artificial life, which fascinated him and transformed his relationship with colour, making his painting sparkling and full of sharp contrasts. He dedicated canvases to some of the most sordid aspects of bohemian Paris, such as prostitution and drug addiction (both of which also featured in the work of Rusiñol and Casas), but he always took a very aesthetic approach to these. The myth of the femme fatale - which was very fashionable at the time - recurs often in his work. Between 1900 and 1914 he built up a considerable collection of oriental art (Chinese lacquer panels, Japanese prints, etc.), which acted as an important source of inspiration. He was also greatly influenced by the Russian ballet, which Diaghilev brought to Paris in 1909.

Following a trip to Valencia in 1904, the region's folklore became a recurring theme in his painting, with the brilliant colours of the regional costumes being the aspect he was most interested in capturing. His use of golden tones was so common that his work evokes Byzantine art. Following the outbreak of the First World War, he moved to Mallorca in 1914, settling in Pollença. His painting now changed. He was seduced by the colours, the light and the sea. He mainly concentrated on landscapes, which he even included in some of the portraits he painted during this period. In Paris he had been in the habit of visiting night-life venues with his small canvases and paints. In Pollença, he took the same tools on his strolls around the area, where he relaxed by painting nature, drawing and taking photographs. *Pollença Landscape* is a fine example of his painting during this period. He adapted the light to the Mediterranean landscape, making it brilliant with rich tones and avoiding the violent chiaroscuro of artificial light. And he remained faithful to some of the traits that had always defined his style, such as the arabesque line of modernist graphic design.

A peculiar phenomenon occurred during his time in Pollença, relating to his life in Paris. In 1910, he had successfully taken part in the International Fine Arts Exhibition in Buenos Aires commemorating the centenary of Argentinian independence. The very positive reception he received encouraged many young Argentinian artists to choose Anglada Camarasa's workshop to complete their training in Paris, resulting in the formation of the Rue Bagneux group. Some members of the group, including Gregorio López Nagui and Tito Cittadini, and other Americans who had joined, such as the Mexican Roberto Montenegro, accompanied Anglada Camarasa on his move to Mallorca a few years later, staying on the island for various periods. He became the core of an artistic colony that was one of the major focal points of modernity in Mallorca in the first half of the twentieth century.

His time in Pollença was interrupted by the outbreak of another conflict, the Spanish Civil War, during which he took refuge in Montserrat, near Barcelona. Anglada Camarasa subsequently went into exile in France due to his Republican ideology, before returning to Pollença in 1947 for the last twelve years of his life. He continued painting during this final period, with his work becoming gradually less frequent and more self-absorbed due to his advanced age.

RICARDO BAROJA (1871-1953)

Ricardo Baroja was a multi-talented intellectual and writer, who dedicated himself mainly to visual art. He came from a family that made a significant contribution to Spanish culture. To an extent, his fame has been eclipsed by that of his brother Pío Baroja and his nephew, the anthropologist Julio Caro Baroja.

Ricardo was a member of the Generation of '98, about which he wrote a series of articles based on his own experiences. These articles were eventually compiled and published as *Gente del 98 (People of 98)*, one of his most successful books. He worked in various literary genres, including journalism, art criticism, fiction and theatre. He was a very active participant in the discussion groups at the Nuevo Café de Levante, organised by Valle Inclán, and "La Cacharrería" at the Ateneo, among many others then taking place in Madrid. He was also involved in other activities, being an inventor and actor, both on stage and in various films. However, he was particularly noteworthy as a painter, engraver and draughtsman.

He took classes in drawing and painting with Eugenio Vivó while studying to enter the Corps of Archivists, Librarians and Archaeologists. After passing the entrance examination in 1894, he took a number of leaves of absence and only practised the profession occasionally and intermittently, finally abandoning it after a decade to dedicate himself to art. His graphic work received great praise in his lifetime, particularly his work as an etcher, which he performed intuitively and with an anti-academic approach that won him the silver medal at the 1906 National Fine Arts Exhibition and the gold medal in 1908.

From the start of his career, Baroja showed that he was an excellent observer, with a strong preference for the urban scenes around him, such as streets peopled with anonymous characters, carnivals, asphalt-layers in the Puerta del Sol and café interiors. His nephews Julio Caro Baroja and Pío Caro Baroja, who both produced biographical sketches of him, said that he did not usually paint from life or from photographs or notes, but that he tended to trust his memory.

The most notable exception to this methodology was a brief stint between 1926 and 1928, to which *Seine riverbank* belongs. Like a study by one of his plein-air predecessors, this work, with its view of the Left Bank, is on prepared cardboard, which is easy to transport. It shows a very reactive and immediate painting that was executed in one session. The centre of the composition is filled with a Morris column, a type of street furniture used to promote shows and films that proliferated in Baron Haussmann's Paris before spreading to other cities. The vibrant colours of the posters pasted to the column and the red coat of a woman in the background provide a light break from the greys, greens and ochres that fill the rest of the painting. This picture was painted in 1928, which was an important year for Baroja. He exhibited work in Madrid, Barcelona and Paris, and was appointed to a teaching post at the National School of Graphic Arts, which probably brought an end to his brief period as an outdoor painter and resulted in him devoting more time to etching.

JOAQUÍN MIR (1873-1940)

Joaquín Mir was one of the most original landscape painters of his time, developing a unique and very personal style. His work stems from a particular sensitivity to colour. His most experi-

mental paintings verge on abstraction, but always as a result of the obsessive observation of light and colour rather than formal elements, and never as an application of theoretical propositions.

He was familiar with plein-air painting from a very early age due to his contact with the Olot School, where his father was from. He subsequently enrolled in the La Llotja school, but he never completed his studies as he never came to terms with academic education. At this time, he was starting to get involved in the vibrant artistic and Bohemian atmosphere of Barcelona. He was a regular at the Els Quatre Gats café, where most modern artists in the city gathered. Between 1893 and 1896, he formed an artistic group with Isidre Nonell, Ramón Pichot and others, which was known as the *Colla de Safrá* (The Saffron Gang), because of the yellows, oranges and ochres they liked to use in their work. This group of friends shared certain attitudes, such as an anti-academic approach and a taste for painting outdoors on the outskirts of Barcelona. However, they had no structured programme or group objectives to restrict their personal interests.

In 1899, Mir applied for a scholarship to the Spanish Academy in Rome. When this was turned down, he travelled to Mallorca with Santiago Rusiñol. There he received a number of major commissions, some with Rusiñol, such as the decoration of the Hotel de la Palma. Apart from these commissions, Mir explored the island extensively on his own. He was deeply moved by its coastal landscape, with its grottos and coves. This experience led him to adopt pantheistic viewpoints and to find his artistic identity, resulting in his most radical work, experimenting with different styles and brushstrokes.

His time in Mallorca led him to lose interest in travelling abroad. He never visited Rome or Paris, as artists of the day usually did. He was only interested in the Mediterranean landscape and his own subjective relationship to it. This period ended abruptly when he fell from a cliff, causing serious injury and resulting in a period of convalescence in a psychiatric hospital in Reus.

When he recovered, Mir remained in Catalonia for the rest of this life, settling first in the Camp de Tarragona region, where he painted *View of L'Aleixar*. The technique in this painting gives a nod to the Impressionism that had interested him in his youth. The coloured shades of the road and the effects of the light show he had assimilated the style he learnt through Casas and Rusiñol, but the colours are much more vibrant, and the composition is very unusual. The town we can see in the distance and the figure on horseback on the road would have been central to the composition in a more traditional painting, but here they receive a secondary treatment, as if they have been included by accident. The artist's focus is on the mass of wild and overgrown vegetation, creating a symphony of colour.

In 1921, after marrying María Estalella, he left the rural world and settled in Vilanova i la Geltrú. In 1939, he was imprisoned for his republican beliefs. Although he was only in prison for a short time, his health never recovered. He died the following year.

FRANCISCO LLORÉNS (1874-1948)

Francisco Lloréns was a late member of de Haes' plein-air group. He acquired his initial training as a landscape painter in 1892 when he entered the San Fernando Royal Academy, but his major influence was Sorolla, who he studied under from 1893. The Va-

lencian painter, who was already renowned, introduced Lloréns to more modern pictorial languages and techniques, and passed on his understanding of light. This influence would persist when Lloréns subsequently made the landscapes of his native Galicia the main theme of his work.

In 1902, Lloréns received a scholarship from the Spanish Academy in Rome. Founded in 1873, the Academy continued the work started by San Fernando, the La Llotja school in Barcelona and other local academies that enabled their students to complete their training through trips abroad in the nineteenth century. The Academy had very traditional artistic criteria (for example, it did not introduce the impressionist exercise of painting the same landscape at different times of day until 1913), but it enabled the student to get to know his destination, visit the studios of established artists and appreciate its art, landscapes and life. The Academy's regulations required the first year to be spent in Rome, with the possibility of travelling to other destinations in subsequent years. In his first year, Lloréns travelled around Rome and its province, Lazio, and neighbouring Umbria and Tuscany.

Rome from the Spanish Academy is a small and rapid sketch on board with a view from the Janiculum hill. Lloréns decided to leave the monumental San Pietro in Montorio (home of the Academy) out of his composition and focus his attention on the viewpoint, with occasional passers-by and a panoramic view of the modern city of Rome bathed in twilight. The horizontal format and use of chiaroscuro reflects the influence of the *Macchiaioli* movement, whose work he was probably familiar with at the time.

The following year, Lloréns visited northern Italy, Paris, Holland and Belgium. Visiting Paris was practically inevitable, as it was the capital of artistic modernity and had been the alternative landmark to Rome for Spanish painters since the start of the nineteenth century. However, apart from the work of Cézanne, the French capital made little impression on him, unlike Belgium, where he found the rainy climate and verdant vegetation much more inspiring. Belgium had been gradually gaining popularity among de Haes' disciples because that is where the master had been born, and because Belgian arts had undergone a massive development second only to Paris, in the second half of the nineteenth.

Francisco Lloréns chose the Belgian city of Bruges as the base for the second year of his scholarship. This medieval city had become a cult destination for artists and writers since the publication of the symbolist novel *The Dead City of Bruges* by George Rodenbach in the 1890s. This popularity was captured by Lloréns in an article for A Coruña's *El Noroeste* newspaper, in which he said brigades of volunteers had been set up to drive away sightseers who were stopping the painters from getting on with their work. In this article he describes the character of the city's population as being very different to that of its visitors. He described a Bruges that was very Catholic and traditional, nostalgic for the glory of its past, with its streets full of solitary old ladies.

Lloréns produced a number of canvases during his months in Bruges, and also a large number of sketches in oils and watercolours and drawings. His work was evolving towards modernism, with his main influence being the Belgian painter Albert Baertsoen.

When he returned to Spain, he obtained a position teaching artistic drawing at the Escuela de Comercio school in Madrid, having first briefly occupied the same position in Barcelona. But he ne-

ver lost his strong connection to Galicia, to which he returned for many years, scouring the region for landscapes to capture in his paintings. At the time, the ideology of the Regenerationist movement was taking a new direction following the independence of the last overseas colonies in 1898. This search for a national identity was reflected in the world of art with the development of regionalist schools. Lloréns was a pioneer in exploring and promoting the landscape of Galicia. He was particularly drawn to the As Mariñas area of La Coruña. *Brañas*, which was painted in Mera, is a distillation of Lloréns' technique, offering a symphony of greens that adapt Mediterranean luminism to the blue hues of the light of a summer day in one of the dampest regions of Spain.

VIRXILIO VIÉITEZ (1930–2008)

Virxilio Viéitez was a self-taught photographer with no artistic ambitions. He captured in the faces of the people of Terra de Montes the spirit of Galicia in the mid twentieth century. After his rediscovery in the late 1990s, he became a prominent figure in Spanish photography.

Viéitez was a travelling portraitist of social events such as holy communions, weddings and funerals, with a preference for images taken outdoors. His distinct aesthetic personality and constant pursuit of technical excellence attracted the attention of renowned international colleagues such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, who famously claimed that one of Viéitez's images was among his favourite photographs.

The images that make up this selection were taken outside the typical studio context. This is partly because Viéitez was always on the move, and partly because of his interest in escaping monotony and enriching the image. He did this by using the context of the people he portrayed. In this way, he imbued his portraits with a wealth of nuances that went beyond traditional portraiture and subtly crossed over into social reportage and anthropology. This is despite the fact that the compositions are highly mediated by the photographer's control, and spontaneity is carefully controlled.

The photographer travelled on foot, on a red bicycle, in a Lambretta and in a Seat 1500. His work in his home area is an impressive testimony to Galician social norms of the time. In *San Marcos* (1958), as in *San Marcos* (1962) and *Soutelo* (1959), Viéitez treats animals as photographic subjects in their own right, on a hierarchical level comparable to humans. This is an important and recurring theme in his work. *San Marcos* (1958) was the photograph that fascinated Bresson. It shows a woman with her son and pet posing in front of a Chevrolet with Panamanian number plates. This is one of the many vehicles that appear in Viéitez's photographs. Another clear example is *Untitled* (1950–60). These luxury vehicles, popularly known as "haigas" and sometimes repeated from one photograph to the next, were often used by returning or visiting émigrés to show that their businesses were flourishing abroad.

In *Untitled* (1960), Viéitez portrays the widow Dorotea do Cará next to the radio set bought with money sent from Venezuela by one of her five sons, Antonio José. He had sent her the money to repay the debt he had contracted to buy the ticket to Venezuela years before, and to give his mother a gift that would keep her company. It is an image that testifies that the funds were used for the agreed purpose, but also builds an emotional bridge between distant people. The radio is placed next to the woman, who is strictly clad in mourning attire. The almost affectionate

way she places her arm on the back of the seat on which the radio rests, as if it were a person, suggests that the device had a sentimental as well as a material value for Dorotea, making the radio a kind of symbol for the absent son.

Indeed, Viéitez was well-known for creating pictures for emigrant families. He was not only a travelling photographer for whom travelling around his region was a major source of income and inspiration ("For me, the most beautiful photography is street photography"), but also a creator of works that were symbolically meant to cross the oceans that the sitters could not.

DAVID HOCKNEY (B. 1937)

David Hockney is undoubtedly one of Britain's best-known and most influential living artists. He was born in Bradford, England, and studied at the Bradford College of Art before moving to California in 1964. There he gained a reputation for his colourful canvases, double portraits and his portrayal of Californian social life.

Hockney showed a limited yet lasting interest in nature throughout his career. However, he only turned to landscape painting fully and systematically as a mature artist. In the late 1990s, the artist began painting landscapes of the Grand Canyon, his home in the Hollywood Hills and his native East Yorkshire. In 1997, he returned to Yorkshire to be with his terminally ill friend Jonathan Silver, who died at the end of the year.

In the period between 2004 and 2013, Hockney returned permanently to England and began painting outdoors, particularly in the Wolds, a region of rolling hills and wide valleys in East Yorkshire. After living for decades on the American West Coast, where the climate is notoriously stable, the artist rediscovered his passion for capturing the seasonal variations that occur throughout the year.

The series *The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire, 2011* (twenty-eleven) comprises dozens of works capturing the passage of the spring season from the depths of winter to its fullness (January to June) and is represented here by two works, one painted on 29 January and the other on 19 March. The pictures show changes in the light and in the leaves, although it is the same location.

The series is as traditional in its subject matter as it is innovative in its technique. In 2010, Hockney acquired his first iPad and immediately experimented with the creative potential of its applications. In the process, he sparked more than a few critical debates about the artistry and quality of his creations. His iPad drawings were printed to the desired dimensions, prompting the artist to adapt his working methods to the enlargements the works would receive. A twenty-first-century version of the sketchbooks that usually accompany artists – such as Hockney himself, who mixes digital and analogue techniques –, this tool represents an innovative approach to the genre without abandoning direct observation of nature or plein-air technique.

For his paintings on canvas, which he paints from life, the artist usually travels in a car specially adapted to transport the half-dozen canvases and various easels he uses in his work. Walking is not an option in this case. Nevertheless, his sensitive view of the English countryside connects him to the great tradition of British landscape painting, spearheaded by his fellow countrymen Turner and Constable. Indeed, his oeuvre is an important con-

temporary step in the history of landscape painting. At the same time, his interest in exploring the seasonal changes of nature regardless of the weather conditions link him closely to the French landscape schools of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, his colour palette and chromatism, together with his treatment of different textures, are reminiscent of van Gogh, whom the British artist says he greatly admires. In this way, Hockney offers a valuable and unique combination of past practises and future possibilities.

CRISTINA GARCÍA RODERO (B.1949)

In 1973, Cristina García Rodero received a grant from the Fundación Juan March to produce a photographic portrait of Spain that would show the rich culture of rural and remote areas that was about to disappear. As the photographer added more and more out-of-the-way places and festivities to the project, it quickly went beyond the goals of the original grant. The final product was published under the title *España oculta (Hidden Spain)* in 1989.

Recalling the years she spent compiling the material for this publication, García Rodero often emphasises the difficulty of navigating a country that was trying to set its own course after the end of the dictatorship: "It had been 15 years, eight years on the road without a car, because I had no money. (...) Everything was slow, difficult, but it also had its good sides; in the villages I talked to the people and they told me their stories. (...) I spent whole days talking to telephone operators to find out about the places where I was going, and the poor person sitting next to me on the train or bus was bombarded with questions: What town are you from? And when are the most beautiful fiestas?" García Rodero is a persevering photographer who has travelled by train, by car, but also in tractors, on horseback and on foot.

Bercianos de Aliste is a town in the municipality of San Vicente de la Cabeza, Zamora, which had 130 inhabitants in 2019. Its Holy Week, now declared a Festival of Regional Tourist Interest and part of Spain's Immaterial Cultural Heritage by the Junta de Castilla y León, was immortalised by García Rodero in 1975 with a sobriety and recollection that has been maintained since the sixteenth century. The Santo Cristo procession, featuring a leaden sky and a line of men in brown cloaks (they can weigh up to five kilos and are handed down from generation to generation) is reminiscent of Ignacio Zuloaga's *Cristo de la sangre* (1911). Except that while Rodero's Spain may have been hidden from the public imagination, it was not black. By combining anthropology and art, images like these helped restore a country's identity and preserve cultural manifestations that, in some cases, have ceased to exist.

Between 1974 and 2010, García Rodero worked regularly in Galicia. She was fascinated by the liveliness and authenticity of the folklore and religious festivals there: "Getting to know that part of Spain was more mysterious for me. I travelled at night during these very long journeys. Processions and festival events were held at weekends, so I returned to Madrid on Monday mornings to teach. A lot of my memories of those days have to do with the Rías Bajas express train and sleepless nights." She had to carry her camera on her back to reach the sometimes poorly connected places where these festivities took place and to participate in some of them. According to her: "My trips provide an opportunity to talk about what distinguishes us from one another, even yet there are more things that connect us."

The Romaría do Corpiño is a religious festival celebrated between 23 and 24 June in the village of O Corpiño in the municipality of Santa Baia de Losón in Lalín, Pontevedra. It is believed that the Virgin, carried in procession by the faithful, exercises her thaumaturgical power over the insane, the sick and all those who are victims of a *meigallo* (ban, curse). García Rodero's photograph, taken five years after Bercianos de Aliste's, shows another manifestation of popular devotion. It depicts a woman circling the shrine on her knees, despite the obvious hardness and dampness of the pavement, still wet from the last downpour. Her face is serious and focused, indicating the solemnity of a vow that drives her to willingly follow a difficult path, which is seen as a sacrifice, in prayer or gratitude for the mercy she received. In the background, the balls and toys on the stands recall the festive and profane element of the festival, which coincides with the night and day of San Juan.

The procession depicted in these photos is in both cases a procession of repentance, of atonement. The actions of the participants are an expression of their spirituality, aspirations and faith, and are given meaning by their context, which is determined by the cultural identity of the group and their adherence to tradition. The people involved in these movement rituals are also vessels through which the memory of the community is passed on.

JORGE BARBI (B. 1950)

With a degree in philosophy from the University of Santiago de Compostela, the practice of the Galician creator Jorge Barbi combines both walking and chance in a very remarkable way. A self-taught, multidisciplinary artist who has tried his hand at painting, sculpture, photography and land art, among other media, his work is often surprising and unclassifiable. Abnormality, humour, language and the passage of time are concerns that remain constant throughout his career.

Barbi's almost daily walks along the same 20 kilometres of coastline have given rise to a series of works with different themes and formats that lyrically and subjectively map a territory he has known since childhood and with which he has deep emotional ties. These two pieces from 2001 are part of the series *Argéntea (Herring Gull)*, taken between the summers of 1996 and 2001 and consisting of 44 photographs showing seagull droppings on rocks. For his production, the artist walked along the coast, examining the remains he found as he went along, looking for anthropomorphic forms in particular, which he then captured with his camera.

This methodology, reminiscent of surrealism, gives chance finds a fundamental role – something which, on the other hand, is not unusual for Barbi given his frequent recourse to found objects – setting up the artist as a kind of mediator between nature and the spectator, whose intervention is limited to taking the digital photograph and adjusting the balance between forms and backgrounds in post-production. His long coastal walks make him the patient compiler of an archive of ephemeral and infrequent images, acting almost as if he were a biologist or a botanist: "Despite their abundance and their renewal after the rains, most of them are amorphous, and in a 10 km journey, it is possible not to find any among thousands of white patches on the rocks whose shape is suggestive. This slim probability turns any small discovery into an exception, and its exhaustive and prolonged search after first being seduced, into one more game of tug of war with chance."

At first glance, the images in *Argénteas* may seem disconcerting. There is a primitivism and a roughness in their finish that resembles rock art typologies like Levantine schematic painting or petroglyphs. The materiality of the stone and the figurative nature of the whitish stains do not offer an immediate identification of what is really in front of us; the tendency of the human brain to continually seek a sense of what it perceives in order to bestow it with meaning causes this to prevail over the signifier. Thus, the visual play by which the audience first perceives the pictogram of the human form and only later realises that they are contemplating an animal stool not only refers to surrealist practices linked to the unconscious, but also denotes a playful and humorous spirit on the part of the artist: after all, Barbi's homunculi, pale spots in which our minds see people like us, are still made up of faeces.

JESÚS MADRIÑÁN (B. 1984)

When one sets out, the starting point and the destination are relatively controllable parameters. The route can be planned and the logistics organised, but it is impossible to predict what will happen along the way.

The work of Galician photographer Jesús Madriñán could be described as a journey. His work is usually based on a personal concern and his approach is almost scientific, with his visual experiments leading to different series. His logistics are determined by the complexity of taking his large-format analogue photography equipment out of his studio. His destination is often an uncertain Ithaca that appears on the horizon as an answer to the original question, and whose final form reveals itself throughout the project. Madriñán pursues his photographic wanderings with curiosity, open-mindedness and, above all, with the awareness that the wonders of chance also play a crucial role in his journey.

I am light is perhaps the most obvious embodiment of the above. The Regional Government of Galicia approached Madriñán through Xacobeo 21-22 to commission an artistic project related to the Way of Saint James in 2019. Although the photographer is from Santiago de Compostela, he had never experienced the Camino first-hand. A firm believer in the importance of personal experience in artistic creation, he decided it was time to do just that. They say you cannot write about what you do not know, and one could argue that Madriñán does not photograph what he does not emotionally connect with.

Thus, the photographer spent two months on a pilgrimage along the French Way between El Bierzo and Fisterra. With the help of an assistant who carried his heavy wooden camera and other materials, Madriñán covered each stage on foot. Along the way, he gained the deep understanding that only experience can provide. He met other walkers along the way, becoming part of a diverse and variable community formed over days of effort and camaraderie, solitude and encounters. In this discovery of the Camino "as a global experience in which religious and faith-based elements merge with other motivations related to introspection, initiation and self-improvement, challenge, adventure and sacrifice, as well as inner healing and, of course, tourism", Madriñán came across what would eventually become *I am light*: people on the Camino.

30 of the 40 photographs in the series are portraits. The pilgrims are young people whom the artist meets along the route, sometimes more than once. He invites them to join him when

they pass the area he has chosen for his work that day. This was the case with the cornfield where *Untitled (Bar)* was taken. In this close-up of the subject's serene face, just as in the other images in the series, there is no information about his location or his pilgrimage, only the fact that he is carrying a backpack. It was the Camino that made him cross the photographer's path, but at that moment the overwhelming humanity of the person in front of the camera takes precedence over the religious and cultural phenomenon. The same is true of *Untitled (Parella en Palas)*, an image showing two lovers lying on the grass in Palas de Rei, having just finished working in an allotment (one of them has green fingers). This is about the communities that emerge on the edge of the Camino, linked to it but not necessarily walking it, as networks of acceptance, exploration and sharing.

On the other hand, *Untitled (Laura)* captures another of the common aspects of pilgrimage: its reflective and healing dimension. Behind her, the path she has walked or will walk is blurred, but in her face we can read that another inner journey is under way. Her Camino, which she suddenly undertook after a sporting event in Burgos, was an attempt to deal with a complicated personal situation, with the emotional journey overlapping with the physical journey.

Not surprisingly, the ten photographs that complete the series are a collection of votive offerings – religious or otherwise – left by walkers at various points along the route, expressing their thoughts, hopes, aspirations and fears. They are, in short, small windows into the intimacy of others, a mini-therapy that gives voices to inner ghosts: in *Desires, pleas and tributes (Open Mind)*, a person promises to be braver, happier and keep an open mind, while *Desires, pleas and tributes (I am light)*, the photograph that gives the series its name and sums up many of its themes, is a testimony that combines compassion, atonement and self-affirmation.

The Camino that Madriñán captures in *I am light* is undoubtedly a subjective one, and one of its successes is that he is aware of this and recognises that objectivity is impossible when it comes to the experiences and motivations of thousands of people. *I am light* is about the artist's discovery of the Camino, while revealing a Camino that is free of stereotypes, deeply human, imbued with emotions and thoughts that make it intangible, subtle and fragile, but also tolerant, combative and resilient.

ISMAEL TEIRA (B. 1987)

With a sharp, analytical eye, Galician artist and researcher Ismael Teira focuses his creative and academic work on the links between walking and landscape. With a degree in Art History from the University of Santiago de Compostela, his production stands out for its detailed observation and slow reflection in order to subsequently generate works that are rich in complexity and conceptual nuances.

Postal de París and *Compostela: camiños do desexo* are two examples of Teira's interest in capturing what usually goes unnoticed. Both projects reflect the result of human actions – footprints in this case – and both highlight the effects that the repetition of these actions has on the landscape. It should also be noted that both are exponents of the importance that Teira attaches to the titles of his works, which are inseparable from them and generally essential for their understanding.

Postal de París (2014) was taken in the French capital and from

the top of the Eiffel Tower. It shows the degradation of a patch of grass caused by the constant backward steps of tourists in their eagerness to photograph the monument in its entirety. This testimony of recurrent behaviours is perceived from above as a negative drawing that constitutes a projection on the horizontal plane of the triangular structure of the tower. Its capture at a moment when no one is making use of the bald spot for the purpose for which it was created increases the visual power of the emptiness generated by the diachronic accumulation of presences. The title is both poetic and humorous, as Teira's postcard of Paris is a far cry from the colourful, glossy cards sold as souvenirs, and yet it is as much the result of a tourist economy as they are.

LOUIS HUART (1813-1865)

A *flâneur* is someone who wanders around a city without any particular destination in mind, absorbing the life going on around them and the changes taking place. Although the term has long existed in French, it started to take on new importance in the nineteenth century in response to the popularisation of this type of urban rambling. We find an early example of this new phenomenon in *Le flâneur au salon ou Mr Bon-Homme* (The *flâneur* in the Salon or Mr Gentleman), an anonymous text from 1806. However, the *flâneur* only started to become common in literary sources in the 1840s, in examples such as the work we are considering here.

Charles Baudelaire is, perhaps, the author most indissolubly linked to the term *flâneur*, having analysed this character in his 1863 essay *The painter of modern life*. His *flâneur* found a new stage in the renovation of Paris by Baron Haussmann between 1853 and 1870, realising the dream of Napoleon III of having a capital that reflected the glory of the French empire. This resulted in the development of new and spacious boulevards, complemented by passages in which shop windows displayed the huge array of merchandise available to passers-by.

This early version of the *flâneur* - so characteristic and representative of nineteenth-century Paris - mutated with the transformations of capitalism and the changes these caused in the city, but never entirely disappeared. Its influence could still be felt in the avant-garde artists of the twentieth century, such as the Surrealist wanderings of Louis Aragon and his *Le Paysan de Paris* (Paris peasant), and the Letterist International and their heirs, the situationists of Guy Debord.

Walter Benjamin dedicated a large part of his unfinished *Passages* project to studying the idea of the *flâneur* based on Baudelaire's texts. The influence of his work in the academic world and cultural criticism has generated a huge bibliography that continues to grow.

Physiologie du Flâneur (The physiology of the flâneur) has an important place in the literature of this phenomenon. Louis Huart (1813-1865) was a French journalist, critic and satirical writer who edited a series of short parodies of types of Parisian characters in 1841-42, which he called "Physiologies". These studies were hugely successful and generated a sub-genre of texts caricaturing the behaviour and aspects of different social and professional groups. These studies were known as "physiologies" in honour of Huart's work.

Physiologie du Flâneur did not provide a precise definition of the term, but it did set out the physical characteristics that enabled an individual to be a *flâneur*: Strong legs, a finely tuned ear and observant eyes. In addition to these basic parameters, they had no physical impediments and were not in poor health or over-

weight. They also had to be free of debts so they could carry on their *flânerie* without worrying about money. Huart's *flâneur* is masculine: women are something to be observed. The *flâneur* is bourgeois and financially independent - though with a strong preference for free events - and has a standard-issue body.

Despite its humorous tone, *Physiologie du Flâneur* is a key text for understanding this paradigmatic nineteenth-century figure, who represented a way of being and experiencing the world that has continued to be influential, acquiring new meanings and nuances until today.

BENJAMÍN PALENCIA (1894-1980)

Benjamín Palencia was one of the leading avant-garde figures in Spain and one of the protagonists in what was known at the time as "Arte Nuevo" (New Art). He cultivated and contributed to a lyrical side of Surrealism, deeply rooted in the rural and the land, which led him to develop a very personal poetry of landscape and the earth as an element. His artistic experimentation led him to explore other languages, such as cubism and abstraction, traces of which often appear in his work.

Palencia experienced his greatest creative and experimental success from the mid-1920s until the outbreak of the Civil War. In this period he was involved in projects such as the Sociedad de Artistas Ibéricos (Society of Iberian Artists), where he met his future collaborator Alberto Sánchez, and numerous individual and group exhibitions. During these years, he was friends and worked with other leading visual and literary artists and intellectuals, such as Juan Ramón Jiménez and Federico García Lorca.

Between 1927 and 1936, Palencia and Alberto Sánchez were at the heart of an informal creative grouping (with no manifesto and open participation) that later became known to art historians as the Vallecas School. The objective of this group was to achieve artistic renewal through a genuinely Spanish avant-garde, as an alternative and complement to foreign movements. The starting point, according to Alberto Sánchez, was the walks they took together every day. These walks started from Atocha and headed south through the hills and other scarcely urbanised areas of Madrid. At the time, this was a very humble area in human terms and arid by nature. As with their aesthetic ideas, these walks focused on the rural and "poor", with an urgent desire to perceive the Castilian landscape from original perspectives, deliberately employing surrealist sensibilities and attitudes. These traits are defining features of the aesthetics of the Vallecas School. They were sometimes accompanied on these walks by others, such as Pancho Lasso, Antonio Rodríguez Luna, Maruja Mallo, Rafael Alberti and Miguel Hernández.

Frozen smoke and *Astral landscape* are very representative of Palencia's work during this period. In these paintings, the walks and exploration on foot were not only a source of inspiration but also a source of materials, such as soil and sand, which the artists collected from fallow land so that the landscape became an integral part of their work. The source of this technique can be traced back to their trip to Paris in 1926, where they met some of the leading avant-garde figures of the day, particularly the circle around the journal Cahiers D'Art. At the time, artists in the surrealist group were starting to experiment with incorporating unusual materials into their work. One such artist was André Masson, who at the time was producing his first paintings with sand as a way of exploring psychic automatism. In these works, he mixed sand with glue and dropped it onto the canvas

at random, completing the shapes suggested using other pictorial techniques. Palencia incorporated these innovations into his work in a completely new way, using them consciously and deliberately so as to transform the walk itself into a work of art.

Palencia shared aspects of his pictorial universe with other artists, such as Salvador Dalí and Yves Tanguy, who had used desolate sandy plains as settings for solitary figures, and Joan Miró, who recreated the poetic dialogue between the earth and the cosmos with a similar sensibility. The reduction of objects to almost being just symbols is something Palencia shares with Miró. The visual source for this dates back to prehistoric art, which was a source of fascination for Palencia, as evidenced by him having a copy of the book *El Hombre Fósil* (Fossil Man), published by Hugo Obermaier in 1925, in his library. This chimes with his desire to pursue the primitive and the essential in his work.

EILEEN AGAR (1899-1991)

In 1936, the critic Herbert Read and the artist and writer Roland Penrose visited Eileen Agar's studio in London to declare her a member of the British surrealist group. The Anglo-Argentinian painter replied with a sardonic "Am I?". Despite never fully identifying with the label, she had no qualms about accepting the invitation to take part in the International Surrealist Exhibition at London's New Burlington Galleries that year.

Agar's attitude to her active involvement in the group - reluctant but relaxed - came from her desire to preserve her freedom and autonomy, even though her affinity with its aesthetic was palpable. She had been very familiar with the movement since living in Paris after completing her training at the prestigious Slade School at the end of the 1920s. During her time in Paris, she had met André Bretón, Paul Éluard and other members of the surrealist group. While cubism and abstraction also left their mark in her work, she was very stimulated by the fantastical imaginari-um of the surrealist approach. Her tireless enthusiasm for experimentation led her to embrace some of the favourite techniques of the surrealist movement, such as collage, frottage, and found and ready-made objects, which would fascinate her throughout her career.

Her curiosity for unusual objects and collecting dated back to childhood. She would first have experienced this through cut-out books and similar craft activities that were very popular during the Victorian period. From the 1930s, she began exploring this obsession in depth, with collages and similar techniques featuring prominently in her work. *Self-Portrait with Dandy, West Bay, Dorset* is an early example of this. Her walk with her partner, Joseph Bard, and his dog on the beach was the starting point for this watercolour to which she added a leaf (which she perhaps collected on one of her walks) introducing a diagonal that adds movement to the composition.

In the mid-1930s, she met and started a relationship with Paul Nash. Their mutual influence is crucial for understanding the work of both of these artists during this period. They were both deeply fascinated by nature. When she first met Nash, he was preparing a tourist guide to Dorset for the oil company Shell, in which the region's geology and fossil remains of prehistoric life had a central role. Agar and Nash took countless walks along the coast, collecting shells, stones and all types of objects, both natural and man-made. "Trawling for objects became a favourite working method of mine" she said. "I surround myself with fantastic bric-à-brac in order to trigger my imagination. For it is

a certain kind of sensitive chaos that is creative, and not sterile order." These finds reappear in the work of both artists, in photographs, photomontages and paintings. Agar, continuing the same approach as in *Self-portrait with Dandy*, often glued them to her paintings and drawings. Another practice she started exploring in this period, and would continue using until her death in the 1990s, was three-dimensional composition, selecting and assembling found objects that piqued her interest to create unexpected dialogues and new objects. *Vol de Nuit*, which she created in the 1950s, is an excellent example of this method. The piece's name was inspired by the rusty decoration from a perfume bottle, which Agar attached to a metallic part with wire, together with shells and snake vertebrae. The work, with its hint of irony, combines a sophisticated consumer object with organic matter and basic materials to create a sort of amulet that benefits from the poetic name of the commercial product.

MARUJA MALLO (1902-1995)

Despite their mutual influence and shared vision, the members of the Vallecas School demonstrated great richness and diversity in their approaches. We can contrast the rural romance and lyricism of Benjamín Palencia with the much more scatological and sinister touches of Maruja Mallo.

The Galician artist's involvement with the school coincided with the most surrealist stage in her career. During these years, she created the series *Sewers and bell towers*, of which *Garbage* is a part, influenced by communal walks around the south of Madrid. Mallo described her experience in Vallecas by saying, "at that time, I was interested in nature eliminating garbage. Burnt and waterlogged land. Sewers driven by the wind. Bell towers broken by storms. The world of things in transit, which I frequently encountered in transport stations. That forms the underpinnings of the content of the work from that period". As with Palencia, Mallo incorporated unusual materials into her canvases, such as whitewash, coal, slime and ashes, which provide the palette of whites, blacks, greys and ochres of this series.

Sewers and bell towers was also a sharp change of direction in Mallo's career. Her earlier work had used bright colours and was festive in tone. It was a celebration of the modern woman, of which she was a paradigmatic representative. Her work was full of independent women, exercising, riding bicycles and enjoying the open air. At the time, just walking through the streets of Madrid was an act of self-affirmation with political connotations for these new women. In the oppressive society of the time, the presence of a single woman at certain times of day or in places reserved for men was an act of rebellion. A gesture as simple as removing a hat in Madrid's Puerta del Sol was enough to cause a scandal and cause passers-by to abuse and ultimately throw stones at Mallo, Margarita Manso, Lorca and Dalí, who were all involved in the incident. This story became so iconic that it became the name of a group of female intellectuals - the *Sin-sombreros* (the Hatless) - who advocated for a role in public life during the Second Republic.

The other main area of her work had been social satire, which reached its climax in the *Verbenas* (Street parties) series. While she was no stranger to having uncanny (Freud's "unheimlich", which was so seductive to the members of the surrealist group) elements in her work, with motifs such as dolls, mannequins and "gloomy interiors" appearing in her *Prints* series, which Lorca referred to as "death notices", it was only in the late 1920s and early 1930s that an existential and much more pessimistic tone

would explode into her work. This change can be explained by a number of biographical details, such as a car accident, the suicide of her friend Mauricio Roesset and her romantic relationship with the poet Rafael Alberti, which ended in the year she created *Garbage*. But we can go beyond anecdotal factors to easily trace the artist's intellectual concerns. There was ferocious criticism of the Spain of the time. While the *Verbenas* series used a humorous and scathing tone to criticise the ruling class, we are now in a tragic and desolate world despoiled by the human presence, which only appears through its detritus and rubbish.

We can see a connection in the works from this period with those of her friends and former colleagues at the Residencia de Estudiantes (literally the "Student Residence") which had become established as a cultural institution, who were using such motifs abundantly. Pepín Bello is credited with coining the term "putrid" to describe the Spanish middle classes, and this term recurred often in the work and correspondence between Lorca and Dalí throughout the 1920s. However, the person who was closest to Mallo creatively in these years was Rafael Alberti with whom, in addition to their mutual influence, she collaborated and shared a mutual imaginarium. Mallo created figurines and decorations for Alberti's theatrical works, and illustrations and some texts for his collection of poems *Yo era un tonto y lo que he visto me ha hecho dos tontos* (I was a fool and what I have seen has made me two fools), which was unfinished at the end of their relationship. Alberti, meanwhile, made some poetic transcriptions of Mallo's paintings in *Sermones y moradas* (Sermons and sojourns) and *Sobre los ángeles* (Concerning the angels), and dedicated poems such as *La primera ascensión de Maruja Mallo al subsuelo* (The first ascension of Maruja Mallo to the underground) to her.

Mallo's indispensable contribution to the history of Spanish art was buried during her exile in Argentina. It was only when she returned to Spain in the 1980s that she began to reclaim her rightful place. Since then, the appreciation of her contribution has grown slowly but constantly, with the publication of her catalogue raisonné in 2021, for example.

HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON (1908-2004)

Henri Cartier-Bresson is one of the most admired and influential photographers in history. Nicknamed "The eye of the century", he is considered the father of photojournalism. His name is indelibly linked with the legendary Magnum Agency, which he founded in 1947 with Robert Capa, David "Chim" Seymour and other veteran war reporters, redefining the relationship of photography with the media.

But as paradoxical as it may seem, the career of one of the masters of capturing reality had its roots in Surrealism. This is often relegated to a footnote, as Cartier-Bresson stopped referring to himself as a Surrealist in the 1940s, following Capa's advice, in order to establish a reputation as a photojournalist. But the traces of this early experience remained latent in him and his subsequent career.

As a student of painting in the academy of André Lhote, Cartier-Bresson started frequenting the Café Cyrano in the Place Blanche, where André Breton and his acolytes would meet. The young artist quickly became enthralled by the theories and thinking of the Surrealist group. Although he never officially joined the group, his work in the 1930s shares their aesthetic and contributed to the development of their precepts.

At the start of the 1930s, Cartier-Bresson's development was marked by a series of international trips, which would be the first of many. Travelling with André Pieyre de Mandiargues, he visited Africa in 1930, and northern and eastern Europe in 1931. Following a break in 1932 when he returned to France, they were joined by Leonor Fini and travelled through Italy and Spain in 1933.

These trips were conceived as formative life experiences rather than artistic or professional projects, but they played an important role in the development of Cartier-Bresson's career. They marked the point at which photography - rather than painting - became his main interest. Having tried a number of other cameras, in 1932 he acquired his first Leica. This camera was smaller and faster than previous models, enabling him to be much more mobile and dynamic. It would become his favourite for the rest of his life. Just as plein-air painting had been facilitated in the previous century by the development of portable easels and tubes of paint, Cartier-Bresson's generation were able to leave their photographic studios and take to the streets thanks to the development of cameras that were light and easily portable.

These trips also reveal a clear evolution in Cartier-Bresson's artistic vocabulary. *Hungary* is an example of photography very much in tune with classic Surrealist tastes. There is a precedent for it in the work of the amateur photographer Eugène Atget, who had been promoted by Man Ray, who had included Atget's work in the journal *La Révolution Surréaliste*. Atget's project to document the streets of Paris featured many examples of shop windows and mannequins. *Hungary* offers a variation on this theme: a selection of incongruous objects encountered by chance during a stroll through the streets of Budapest. This presents the Freudian "uncanny" (the bust of the mannequin) and the ingenuous and sentimental expressiveness of a popular print.

Shop windows had also played a prominent role in Louis Aragon's book *Le Paysan de Paris* (Paris Peasant), provoking poetic reveries in its peasant protagonist during his wanderings through the metropolis. The book describes the Buttes-Chaumont park as the place where "the town's collective unconscious" has settled. This phrase perfectly encapsulates the reasoning behind the numerous wanderings of the Surrealist group, in which they traversed the city in pursuit of the marvellous in the everyday, exploring the relationship between the psyche and the territory.

The influence and internalisation of this thinking, and the *modus operandi* that accompanied it, can be appreciated in the two photographs taken by Cartier-Bresson in his trip to Spain in 1933. These works are examples of the increasing confidence and maturity of an artist who had found his voice. His attention has shifted from static objects to the human flow, and the way in which this adapts to its environment, in other words, to the street as a whole. The strong sense of composition learnt in his painting lessons is here put to the service of evidencing the unexpected and the fleeting. It is in the work of this period that we see the emergence of the most famous concept associated with Cartier-Bresson: capturing the "decisive moment".

HELEN LEVITT (1913-2009)

Throughout a long career that spanned from the 1930s to the 1990s, the American photographer Helen Levitt specialised in portraying her native New York. Levitt began her career training with a commercial photographer before focusing on the city's most impoverished neighbourhoods and streets. This included

the Lower East Side of Manhattan, Bronx, and Spanish Harlem. On foot, with a Leica 35mm camera and an angle finder (*winkelsucher*) – a lateral viewer mounted on the camera that allowed her to discreetly shoot in one direction while facing another – her photographs capture chance encounters and moments captured in the Bressonian “decisive moment”. Her street photography stands out for its tenderness, lyricism and sometimes a touch of humour.

Her photographs combine stolen images with scenes in which the subjects are fully aware that they are being photographed. They show a lively but largely innocent street life, where children, animals and women often take centre stage. Her works convey a sense of connection, closeness and sometimes complicity with the people who are on the other side of the viewfinder. She also uses her often disconcerting or absurd compositions to show her interest in and knowledge of the aesthetics of the avant-gardes and Surrealism.

Parallel to the artistic dimension of photography, Levitt was aware of its power to make other realities visible, even if she did not openly espouse a political cause: “I decided I should take pictures of working-class people and contribute to the movements... Whatever movements there were: socialism, communism, whatever was going on. And then I saw pictures of Cartier-Bresson and realised that photography could be an art – and that made me ambitious.” Bresson taught her that images didn’t have to be associated with social content, that they could also have their own value. Her photographs offer an elegant balance between aesthetics and testimony by depicting the reality of New York’s working-class communities, without any overt social commentary or criticism. Rather, they are imbued with a poetic sensibility that calmly captures the hardship and living conditions of the post-war era, as well as the evolution and development of these boroughs since the mid twentieth century.

These images show several of Levitt’s most distinctive subjects. They date from the same period, the early 1940s, and show various Manhattan residents going about their daily lives. Set against the backdrop of a hot New York summer, there are images of children sitting by a window, a shirtless man reclining peacefully against the wall of a residential building, and a woman knitting as she passes another woman perched on a folding chair by the curb. “It was a very good neighbourhood [Spanish Harlem] for taking pictures in those days because that was before television. There was a lot happening. And then the older people would sometimes be sitting out on the stoops because of the heat. They didn’t have air conditioning in those days. It was, don’t forget, in the late 1930s. So those neighbourhoods were very active.”, Levitt recalled in a 2001 interview. The image of the boy with the umbrella who seems to be standing in front of a fire hydrant reflects the unpredictability and uncontrollability of photographing on the street with instant film and portable cameras – serendipities that also populate the work of her contemporaries Lisette Model, Vivien Mayer or Walker Evans, with whom she was friends and shared walks in search for inspiration. These photographs evidence a collective use of public space, a social appropriation of the city and an urban life that takes place outside of private residences. They also reflect the work of a *flâneuse* photographer who is constantly restless, with her eyes and senses open, ready to engage fully with her surroundings and the people around her.

DADAIST GROUP OF PARIS (1921)

The visit to Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre in the Latin Quarter of Paris was the first activity in the “Great Dada Season” (the name used on posters and flyers to promote this event), and the last. On 14 April 1921, the Dadaist group of Paris and an audience of around 50 people met in the garden of this small mediaeval church for a performance, before the concept of performance art had been invented. This group of creative artists was already well versed in holding events, which they used for their provocative anti-art creations.

Originating in neutral Zurich in 1916, in the middle of the First World War, the anti-war, anti-bourgeois and pro-irrational spirit of Dada was spreading in cities such as Berlin, New York and Paris. In Paris, which already had contacts with the Swiss core of the movement, the start of the Dada movement can be dated to 1919 and the arrival of the poet Tristan Tzara, who had been one of the protagonists in the happenings at the Cabaret Voltaire in Switzerland. Tzara joined the circle of artists and writers around the *Littérature* journal, edited by André Breton and Philippe Soupault, whose regular contributors included Francis Picabia, Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard (all of whom were at the visit to Saint-Julien, except Picabia, who was ill).

This excursion was a change of scene for a Dadaist activity, as they usually took place on stages and in cafés and other interiors. They chose a minor building from the Gothic period that had survived Baron Haussmann’s reforms and had been abandoned. At the time, the building was considered vulgar and of no interest. As the advert for the excursion says, it “truly has no reason to exist”. This action was conceived as a parody of the tourist visits that were starting to become popular in Paris, signposting the development of a new industry. Acting as the guides, the Dadaists read definitions taken at random from a dictionary and proclaimed manifestos in this banal setting. The Dadaist group had already been active for several years in the capital and had become notorious for its hostile treatment of the audience and confrontations with them, which were completely expected and desired. But this time the reaction was not as expected. The premises of the visit were extravagant but, rather than acting offended and hostile, the audience, who probably had certain expectations of what a Dada happening would entail, simply lost interest and drifted away. The memories of the members of the group reveal a universal sense that the event was a failure. This is probably why the other activities originally planned in the series never took place.

This first failed experience marked the start of the decline of Dada in Paris. The audience’s lack of reaction showed that the group was losing its capacity to shock with its usual activities. And the tensions among some members of the group, which had already started to emerge, were increasing. Picabia left the group in May that year. Tzara remained committed until the publication of *Mouchoir de Nuages (Handkerchief of clouds)* and *Seven Dada Manifestos* in 1924, but confrontations with Breton were becoming more and more frequent. And the interest of Breton and some of his acolytes was moving on from Dadaism to other themes, such as the exploration of the unconscious, as described by the new science of psychoanalysis, and the emerging movement that would become known as Surrealism.

GUY DEBORD (1931–1994)

Guy Debord was a theorist, philosopher, member of the Lettrist International, and founder of the Situationist International. His 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle* is one of the most important texts for the school of thought behind the May '68 protests in France.

Lettrism emerged in the mid-1940s and was pioneered by the poets Isidore Issou and Gabriel Pomerand. This avant-garde literary movement attached greater importance to the sound rather than to the meaning of words. Following the publication of its manifesto in January 1946, Lettrism sought to spread across all art forms in order to establish disruptive anti-art that opposed capitalism.

The differing views within the movement, coupled to Issou's strong leadership, soon led to disagreements and splits, so that in 1952 some members, including Debord, founded the Lettrist International, which evolved into the Situationist International (1957–72) in 1957. With the revolutionary aim of surpassing the arts, these movements introduced two new terms: *dérive* (drift) and psychogeography.

Debord introduced the term *dérive* in his *Theory of the Dérive* (1956), although he did not actually coin the term. It is a concept that entails a "playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll." It was postulated as a step beyond surrealist wandering. It placed more emphasis on group activity than on the individual, acknowledged play and aspired to be an objective way of exploring the urban space. Surrealist randomness and chance were replaced in the *dérive* by parameters and methodology. It acknowledged that the city possessed its own idiosyncrasy that influenced its application.

This last point is linked to the idea of psychogeography, coined in 1955. Debord defined it in 1958 as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals." Owing to his fascination with the laws of the environment and their effects on people, Debord created maps with psychogeographical contours that constituted an invitation to explore the city using the *dérive* as a working method.

Psychogeographical guide to Paris. Discourses on the passions of love was the first Situationist map, albeit inspired by its author's previous Lettrist experiences. Originally part of a series of five maps meant to be shown at the *First Exhibition of Psychogeography* in the Taptoe Gallery in Brussels (February 1957), the collage was printed in Denmark in May 1957 in collaboration with Asger Jorn after Debord declined to participate in the exhibition. It was based on a 1734 plan of the city known as the Turgot Map of Paris. The idea behind it was to create a foldable map that could then be distributed in a similar way to the maps in tourist offices. The guide subverts the official map of Paris by cutting out 19 sections, rearranging them and connecting them with red arrows indicating the flows of energy around certain "units of ambience", i.e. "the spontaneous turns of direction taken by a subject moving through these surroundings in disregard of the useful connections – whether for work or leisure – that ordinarily govern their conduct." (Excerpt from the 1958 edition of the guide). Users of the map were thus free to choose their route, which gave them the opportunity to re-evaluate their experience of the city and their emotional responses.

Debord's contribution to the aesthetics of walking aims to playfully re-appropriate the urban landscape. But it also serves as a communal exercise to combat capitalist individualism and reclaim personal time for purposes other than productive ones. His thinking has been extensively analysed, expanded and challenged. His influence can still be felt today in contemporary artistic practise, both theoretically and methodologically.

RICHARD LONG (B. 1945)

Richard Long, who was educated at Saint Martin's School of Art, has been at the forefront of British conceptual and land art ever since his 1967 work *A Line Made by Walking*, which was a performative conceptual piece that saw him trace a straight line across the flattened grass of a field by repeatedly walking the same distance over a period of time. His work spans sculptures and maps to photos and texts. Since the mid-1960s, he has been focusing on the act of walking through natural landscapes. Sometimes, he interacts with materials and places, or leaves traces and marks in the landscape.

The four lithographic prints that make up *Being in the Moment* belong to different walks made at different times, with a gap of almost 20 years between the first and the other three (1969 and 1998). This gap evidences Long's conceptual coherence in the fact that walks, time, space and distance are his usual working materials. The pictures were published as a set in 1999 on the occasion of an exhibition of the same name at the Museum Kurhaus Kleve in Kleve, Germany, and are not arranged chronologically: the first walk corresponds to a trip through England in 1998, the second – the earliest – to his ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro in 1969, and the last two to his visits to the Cotopaxi volcano and the El Cónдор biological reserve, both in Ecuador, also in 1998. The title which unites them all is an existential reflection. An awareness on the part of the artist of the "here" and "now" in which the images were captured. They bear witness to four ephemeral moments in extraordinary places, to which he likely will never return. These moments when the present and the location give the artist a sense of being "in the moment" are inevitably in natural settings with which Long feels in communion and harmony and to which he feels an affinity despite the distances between them.

Untitled is also the result of Long's ongoing explorations of the landscape. In this instance, he uses materials that are found in nature, but instead of altering or moving them *in situ* (as classical land art would), he takes them from their natural context and places them in a different place, such as the museum space. Long makes nature both the subject and the medium of his art. His sculptures often use simple geometric forms like lines, circles or crosses. Many of them are made of stones because, as he acknowledges: "I like common materials, whatever is to hand, but especially stones. I like the idea that stones are what the world is made of."

In this work, the arrangement of the marble fragments within a circular crown contrasts the rough, grainy texture of the stone with the circular shape defined by the artist. This creates a tension between the natural properties of the mineral and the prescribed geometric domestication. The artist carefully determines the thickness and spacing of the concentric lines as well as the required density of the marble fragments composing each line. On several occasions, the artist has said that his main theme is the interplay of his human nature and the forces and patterns in nature.

At the same time, the dimensions of the work, its three-dimensionality and its appropriation of space invite the viewer to walk around its truncated circumference, in an echo of the artist's displacement, which in turn creates in the viewer a new circular crown: that of their trajectory. This invitation to movement allows the artist to translate and mediate his personal experience of walking in the open and transpose it to the artificial and controlled space of the exhibition.

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ (B. 1946) AND ULAY (1943–2020)

Marina Abramović, dubbed the "grandmother of performance", has often used walking as a medium for her art. The performance she did in 1988 with Ulay (Frank Uwe Laysiepen), her professional and sentimental partner, is perhaps her most famous work of this kind.

The two had met in the mid-1970s and had been together and carried out many joint performances ever since. Their creative collaboration had a profound impact on the genre. In the early 1980s, Abramović and Ulay conceived an ideal performance to celebrate their love: walking straight across the Great Wall of China, camping out in the open until they met in the middle and got married. *The Lovers* was meant to be an epic performance that sealed a romance of equal proportions. "The energy you experience from the wall seemed perfect to us to make a work of art. And it was: it was painful, it was hardship, but it made me merge with the landscape." Abramović would sum up.

But the two artists had not anticipated another wall, this time a bureaucratic one, erected by the Chinese authorities, who struggled to understand why two individuals would want to walk the entire length of the Great Wall, and do it as an artistic performance. Letters, phone calls and various procedures to obtain permits and visas dragged out the process. It was not until 1988 that they finally received official permission to begin their journey, after agreeing to be filmed for Chinese television and the BBC and accompanied by translators.

On 30 March of the same year, Abramović set off westwards from Shai Hai Guan on the Bohai Gulf and Ulay eastwards from Jai Yu Guan in the foothills of the Gobi Desert. Ahead of them lay a gruelling 90-day trek — at a speed of about 20 kilometres per day — over a route that was sometimes unsuitable or even dangerous for walking: "It was so difficult, because only parts of the wall were renovated for tourists. The rest of it, around the mountains, was a ruin." When she arrived in the villages where she spent the night, the inhabitants were curious about her. She asked them to tell her the legends of the area. As the months went by, she also developed a friendly relationship with the interpreter assigned to her by the Chinese government. In the meantime, Ulay made his way through the desert or crossed the Yellow River on a raft under similar circumstances.

The two artists met on 27 June 1988 on a bridge in Erlang Shen, Shemu, a Buddhist temple district in Shaanxi province, where Ulay had arrived three days earlier. They were greeted by the press, music and even fireworks. Their performance, initially devised to be private, had ended up being watched by many people. When they finally came face to face, they embraced and Abramović burst into tears.

The marriage ceremony never took place. The artist recalled the

encounter with Ulay years later and said: "First I was angry, then I was sad, then I cried." "It made me incredibly angry because, conceptually, we were supposed to meet and marry wherever the wall took us. I didn't care about how beautiful the place was. I wanted to be radical with the work. Then he told me his translator was pregnant with his child. He asked me what to do. I told him he should marry her. And then we said goodbye."

In the years between the original idea for *The Lovers* and the execution of the performance, the artists had drifted apart personally and professionally, and their relationship had suffered. The winding and lonely path along the spine of the legendary Chinese dragon had become one that no longer led to the sublimation of their love, but to the consummation of the rupture. As the description of the piece sums up: "We each took a 2,000 kilometre walk to say goodbye."

After this experience, Abramović and Ulay parted ways. They did not see each other again until 2010. *The Lovers* is a gruelling physical and emotional experience, making it the ultimate crossroads for art, walking and life. It also serves as a metaphor for unexpected outcomes at the end of a journey.

HAMISH FULTON (B. 1946)

Hamish Fulton was born in London and studied at Saint Martin's School of Art and the Royal College of Art. Like Bruce McLean, Gilbert & George and Richard Long, he belongs to a group of British artists that in the mid-1960s set out to discover new artistic practices.

Originally interested in conceptual art, in 1973 Fulton made the decision that would define his career: Over 47 days, he walked some 1,300 kilometres between Duncansby Head (Scotland) and Land's End (Cornwall). The experience led him to decide to "only make art resulting from the experience of individual walks" and to make walking his sole artistic medium. Fulton considers walking to be an art form in its own right. Since the 1970s, he has advocated that it be recognised as such, while emphasising its cultural, social, spiritual and political values.

Fulton walks mainly alone, but since the mid-1990s he has also participated in group walks. His journeys are largely contemplative, and his aim is to blend into the surroundings, refusing to alter or leave traces in the landscapes through which he travels. The fact that he prefers to travel on foot rather than by other, faster, means of transport is a conscious act of resistance to the acceleration of the modern pace of life. In 1981, he declared that his art was "a passive protest against urban society, which alienates people from the natural environment."

In Fulton's art, however, there is a tension between his artistic creation and the way it is disseminated and exhibited. According to his maxim: "No walk, no art", an exhibition in a gallery or museum of work by an artist whose work involves walking in a natural environment is by definition impossible. The 1,300 kilometres walked between Scotland and Cornwall in 1973, with their emotions and experiences, are intangible and cannot be reproduced. They belong to a particular time, place and person.

As a response to this paradox, since 1969 Fulton photographs his actions, mostly in black and white, as a memento. However, they are neither intended as a documentary archive nor as a travel journal. Originally, a single image summarised an entire journey. Gradually it became a series of images, annotated with a few

words. As a landmark along the way or a visual manifestation of a past experience, these photographs serve more as an evocation than a representation.

First coming to the Iberian Peninsula in 1966, the artist has travelled coast to coast and crossed Galicia on several occasions. In fact, all the images in this selection come from a single project. This 2,498-kilometre journey on foot began in Fisterra on 12 October 2005. He then travelled to Logroño, Elche de la Sierra, Seville, Plasencia and Toledo, concentrically working his way from the coast to the interior. The photos show the changing skies and the vast horizons of this secular pilgrimage, but above all the empty, deserted landscapes. They emphasise the loneliness of the walker and his total immersion in his surroundings. Fulton's longstanding artistic practice and unwavering personal consistency are the perfect example of the ultimate symbiosis of art and walking.

MONA HATOUM (B. 1952)

Mona Hatoum is a Lebanese-born, London-based artist of Palestinian origin whose work explores themes such as conflict, violence, the human condition and the concept of home. Using media such as video, installation, sculpture and performance, the artist creates pieces of great subtlety and lyricism that are often highly political and socially charged.

Roadworks is one of Hatoum's best-known works and takes its title from the exhibition of the same name held at the Brixton Art Gallery in London in 1985 and organised by the Brixton Artists Collective. The exhibition lasted three weeks and invited ten artists to carry out their work outside the exhibition space, document it and then exhibit this documentation in the room, so that the project added materials as the days went by and as the performances or actions of each participant followed one after the other.

In the mid-1980s, Brixton was a neighbourhood with a predominantly black population of Afro-Caribbean and working-class origin where riots and clashes due to racial discrimination and economic and social inequality had been taking place since the beginning of the decade. In September of the same year, just months after the exhibition closed, Dorothy "Cherry" Groce was shot by a Metropolitan Police officer in her home during a raid looking for her son, leaving her paralysed from the waist down and triggering a violent outburst that within two days left one person dead, around fifty people injured and extensive material damage.

Hatoum's performance on 21 May 1985 – one of three she gave for the exhibition – consisted of walking barefoot for an hour, dressed in black and dragging a pair of Doc Martens boots tied to her ankles by the laces. The steps of the artist, who made a circular route starting and finishing in the exhibition space, were constantly obstructed by the boots that followed her and which, at the time, were associated both with the punk movement and, more significantly, with skinheads and the British police, thus alluding to the tensions in the area. The metaphorical use of the boots was not lost on the residents, as the artist herself recalled in 1997: "One comment I really liked was when a group of builders, standing having their lunch break, said 'What the hell is happening here? What is she up to?' And this black woman, passing by with her shopping, said to them, 'Well it's obvious. She's being followed by the police.'" Hatoum's action can be understood as a reflection on control and oppression, unprotectedness and vio-

lence, and is a powerful example of the symbolic use of the act of walking as a social and political commentary.

The photograph exhibited alongside the video that documented the performance was taken by the artist a decade later, extracting a frame from the original recording, cropping and enlarging it. The use of black and white accentuates the contrast between the solidity of the footwear and the vulnerability of the skin; at the same time, the absence of the context that gave rise to the image makes its message universal and timeless. The position of the piece, on the floor and leaning against the wall, invites the spectator to identify with these feet that occupy the same space as their own and to reflect on their own steps, perhaps instigating them to look for a cause to take up.

FRANCIS ALÿS (B. 1959)

Belgian artist Francis Alÿs fully embraced his creative vocation when he moved to Mexico City in the mid-1980s. Multifaceted and multidisciplinary, his actions and performances often include walks and hikes, carried out by himself or in collaboration with other participants. His work has a markedly lyrical character, a resource with which he deals, showing sensitivity and richness of nuance, with themes of profound anthropological and geopolitical depth, ranging from children's games to the borders between nations.

In late October 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Alÿs had his first solo exhibition in Hong Kong. The artist decided to attend the opening despite the tight restrictions on international travel imposed by the Chinese government, for which he was forced to undergo a 14-day quarantine. This took place in a flat on Lamma Island, southwest of Hong Kong Island. As usual in his artistic practice, Alÿs took advantage of his visit to continue working: the video *Prohibited Steps*, filmed on 19 October 2020 during the eleventh day of isolation, is one of the results of this experience.

The video starts with the artist placing a camera on the ground, but this frame is soon replaced by a general shot taken from a more distant point. The image appears blurred and, as the film progresses, it becomes progressively sharper, showing a figure walking erratically on the flat roof of a residential building surrounded by trees. Towards the end of the video, when the distant image comes into focus and the frame returns to the camera near the artist, it becomes clear that Alÿs was blindfolded from the beginning.

Prohibited Steps is an open work that offers multiple readings. On the one hand, the limited surface of the roof over which the artist moves visually illustrates the floor of the bungalow in which he spent his compulsory quarantine, evoking a restriction of movement that affected millions of people all over the planet in successive lockdowns between 2020 and 2022, which in China were particularly extensive and strict. On the other hand, Hong Kong's recent history has been marked by social tensions and repression, so the piece could also be read politically as a reflection on the absence of freedoms in a broader sense.

Be that as it may, Alÿs employs the act of walking as a symbolic action which, if the title is anything to go by, could have connotations of both defiance and resistance to the established. The fact of moving blindly across a raised space implies a risk for the artist, who hesitates visibly and gropes the ground as he approaches the ends of the roof, aware of his vulnerability if he falls.

The blindness that becomes evident at the end of the video is initially shared by the viewer, who in the first few minutes of the projection sees shapes and colours without really understanding what is happening before their eyes. Alÿs's wandering, measuring the dimensions of the roof with his irregular steps, is disconcerting in its syncopated rhythm and anarchic trajectory, and only makes full sense when the viewer removes their own blindfold and is able to contemplate reality as it is.

VICTORIA EVANS

Victoria Evans is a British artist whose work is concerned with perception and representation, and how these affect our understanding of and relationship to reality.

It Takes A Year to Walk Around The Sun was the result of a 365-day experience that took place between the summer solstices of 2016 and 2017. To carry out this performative work, the artist recorded daily videos of herself in different locations and contexts. These were uploaded to an Instagram account (@WalkAroundTheSun) as a visual diary and documentary archive. The time period chosen for this exploration of walking coincided with the Way of Saint James from Madrid to Muxia, which the artist walked from August to September 2016, accompanied by another artist, Sara Alonso (discussed in another section of this book).

This audio-visual summary of a journey around the sun lasts just over 11 minutes, almost as long in number as the months that led up to it. The chosen point of view allows audiences to observe only the terrain, the walker's feet and occasionally her shadow. The viewer takes the artist's place and participates in her walk, which is projected onto the ground. The rhythm of footsteps and breath, the urban and rural sounds that accompany them, and the passing of time, evident in the changes of light, weather conditions and biological rhythms, such as falling leaves and flowering daffodils, form an enveloping, hypnotic narrative. This narrative aims to emphasise the contrast between subjective perception and the objective measurement of time.

Tidesong, which also explores the contrast between objectivity-subjectivity and measurement-perception, is a long-term project accessible through a website and app that allows users to listen to the evolution of the tides in relation to the phases of the moon and the days of the sun and moon. This work transforms tidal measurements taken at various locations along the coast into sounds that users can interact with via the motion sensors on their mobile phones. These melodies are specific to the place and time the listener is in. This is because both the evolution of the tides and their interaction with the moon and the sun change throughout the year, but also because the topography of each region gives the tidal cycles of a particular area their own characteristics.

The tidal melodies are recorded anonymously in the software so that anyone can listen to them again – even if they are far from the sea – and gradually build up a sound record of the coast. In this way, the app can be not only a real-time sound generator, but also a repository for unique melodies activated by members of the public. The radius of action of the piece is also scalable, as it is based on measurements collected by government agencies, so it could potentially reach the entire planet.

The interface is easy to use, portable and has a playful poetic dimension that transforms objective numerical data into scores.

This encourages the user to go to coastal areas, explore them and play with the position of their body in relation to the other elements that create the music. The experience attempts to bring the listener into the here and now. It encourages them to look at the environment through a different lens and appreciate the rhythm of the cosmos.

JUANMA GONZÁLEZ (B. 1977)

The Madrid-born, Sweden-based artist Juanma González defines himself as "a pilgrim and an artist", in that order. This self-identification with the figure of the pilgrim has roots in his youth linked to his experience of the Way of Saint James when he was sixteen. Currently, González uses the phenomenon of pilgrimage as a framework for his artistic research, using walking as both a creative and pedagogical methodology.

Apostlahästar på Gotland (Pilgrimage in Gotland - the word "apostlahästar" in Swedish translates as "apostles' horses" and its meaning is the equivalent to "shank's mare" in English) is a complex and ambitious project whose results are still in a phase of growth and development. For 21 days between July and August 2017, the artist and six other strangers from different disciplines and countries – including other artists, an anthropologist, a journalist and a philologist – undertook a walking route of some 325 kilometres across the Swedish island of Gotland from south to north, from the old watchtower of Sundre Kyrka to the Fårö lighthouse.

Gotland is Sweden's largest island – about 170 kilometres long – and one of the country's most popular tourist destinations thanks to its beaches and mild climate. While the census population is barely 60,000 people, the number of annual visitors has reached over 1.5 million, which has a significant economic, social and cultural impact on the territory.

Using its hundred or so medieval churches as landmarks along the way, the participants in *Apostlahästar på Gotland* relied on local hospitality for accommodation as well as bartering and gifts for food, in an attitude radically different from the power and service relationships established in the tourist sphere. This allowed them to connect with the residents, to learn about and from them, and to penetrate deep into the essence of Gotland. The experience also created a small community of walkers sharing their daily lives, from the ground they slept on to the meals they prepared. It is precisely from this that *KOKBOKEN (COOK-BOOK)* was born, a publication that collects the recipes that the pilgrims shared with each other during the journey.

In 2021 González revisited his experience in Gotland and produced another work inspired by his experiences and reflections: a board game. In it, players can decide whether they want to take on the role of a tourist or a pilgrim, and must complete a series of objectives using a variety of resources. The board connects the island's medieval churches, tourist attractions, harbours and bathing spots, and players must accumulate certain experiences to win the game. Like the Way of Saint James and its corresponding board game *el juego de la oca* (game of the goose), *Apostlahästar på Gotland* and its game *Pilgrims* offers a window into the spiritual and physical experience of pilgrimage and the positive and negative implications of tourism from a playful perspective.

HONI RYAN (B. 1979)

On the morning of 20 November 2016, about 20 people dressed in white and led by a woman gathered in a green area in Lahore, Pakistan. For two hours and over several kilometres, the participants walked together through the city, slowly, silently, listening to their surroundings and to themselves, and leaving behind them a trail of white marble dust.

Lahore is not a city designed for feet, but eminently for traffic. Despite being the country's second largest city after Karachi, there is a shortage of pavements and pedestrian areas for its over 11 million inhabitants. The project *Urbanities: Art and Public Space in Pakistan*, organised by the Goethe-Institut Pakistan in collaboration with the Lahore Biennale Foundation and Vasl Artists' Collective, was born with the idea of being a "critical exploration of urban spaces, their complexities and possibilities, under the premise of individual artistic work and research". The organising committee invited Miro Craemer and Honi Ryan to participate in a residency in these two cities – Karachi and Lahore respectively – with the aim of reflecting on the relationship between contemporary art and the metropolis, and to generate synergies between the artistic fabric of Pakistan and that of Germany.

We Walk Lahore is the title of the research project devised by Australian artist Honi Ryan. Based in Berlin and Paris, Ryan spent two months in Pakistan for fieldwork that consisted of conducting interviews and walking around the city with different people to capture and understand visions, constraints, subtleties and opportunities. This work consisted of several elements: *Subjective Geographies*, pre-planned journeys through different parts of the city in the company of residents marking the route, *Footpath Feasibility*, a piece executed on the ground that created 400 metres of pavement for pedestrians and resulted in a change in city planning to provide pavements in an area of central Lahore, *Walking Presence*, a collective performance, described at the beginning of this text, and *Alhambra Installation*, a presentation in exhibition format of some of the materials – including waste and debris found on the walks –, images and documents collected during the residency.

Ryan's research revealed that walking in Lahore is not a neutral action. Her performance featuring the colour white was reminiscent of the mourning of Islamic funerals, although the presence of women, usually absent from such events, puzzled the rest of the passers-by. The social and gender gap in the country also became evident during fieldwork: on the one hand, Pakistani women do not usually walk, and certainly not alone; on the other hand, moving around on foot can denote low socio-economic status. Walking can pose a health risk when air pollution rises above certain levels, or it can be dangerous if cars always have absolute primacy.

However, walking in these inappropriate and sometimes hostile contexts can also be an act of subversion, of reappropriation, of protest, of reflection, of experimentation, of communion with others and of reconnection with the environment and with oneself. The methodology and conclusions drawn by Ryan in Lahore are at once inextricable from the socio-political context that generated them and overwhelmingly universal, making *Walking Presence* a piece whose currency and urgency resonate with different audiences.

SARA ALONSO (B. 1981)

In the summer of 2016, Sara Alonso, an artist from Burgos, Spain, currently living in Glasgow, Scotland, decided it was time to break free from her demons. After living in Scotland for a few years, she realised that her way of coping with being uprooted was to stay connected to the life she had left behind via the internet and social media. But her attempt to stay connected to a Spain that was constantly changing led to unexpected tensions. She found herself neither in one place nor the other, but with one foot in both.

NOT ALONE arose as a simultaneous exercise in separation and reconnection. For 35 days between August and September, Alonso walked the more than 800 kilometres between her brother's house in Tirso de Molina, Madrid, and the Atlantic Ocean in Muxía, Galicia. The challenge was to walk the path while being truly present, without resorting to technological tricks to hide from the challenge of sensing and reappropriating one's place – tangibly and intangibly – in the universe. The project also offered her a space to reconnect with her own body, to recognise her abilities and limitations. She used this awareness to bring a mind that had been watching the lives of others through screens back into the present.

The choice of the itinerary was also not accidental: Alonso had deliberately chosen a route through innocuous surroundings. It began at her brother's house, where she spent her youth, and led through the Castilian countryside, which was emotionally linked to her childhood – her father came from Quintanilla del Agua in Burgos. The artist felt relaxed and calm, knowing that she was in a safe and recognisable context and that she could communicate in her mother tongue. This freed her from the additional pressure that could have distracted her from her goals.

She also wanted to preserve a tangible record of the physical experience that she was about to undertake. Therefore, she began to look for ways to create a visual diary to document her daily experiences along the way. As this was a contemplative journey focused on the present, Alonso chose a technique that would allow her to use everyday occurrences: the cyanotype. Invented by Sir John Herschel in 1842, this process involves applying a light-sensitive solution to a medium – usually paper – which is then developed with light and water. Anna Atkins, considered one of the first female photographers, made extensive use of this technique in her botanical studies and published the first of these photographs in 1843 under the title *British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*.

So Alonso, a modern-day Atkins, packed up her paper plates and other chemicals and set off towards the ocean with two other pilgrims, including Victoria Evans (who is also featured in this volume). She made the cyanotypes from objects found on the way, such as dry straw or stones, but also from random elements such as shadows. The cyanotypes were developed under natural light and then rinsed with water from any source, such as rivers, lakes or the sea. Thus, each cyanotype was inextricably linked to the moment in which it was made. This became the material record of Alonso's desire to be fully present in the here and now. The cyanotypes dried overnight under the bed and were placed in a black folder the following day to protect them during the journey.

Alonso's pilgrimage, however, also had a penitential dimension. When she gave in to the impulse to connect to the social media

she was detoxing from, she punished herself by destroying the cyanotype she had produced that day. The sacrificial pieces of the self-proclaimed “stolen moments” were burnt in Muxía at the end of the journey.

Eventually, she was left with over a hundred cyanotypes for the NOT ALONE project. Their clear profiles on a blue background make visible the traces of the objects or people that produced them, in a kind of Platonic cave myth that allows the viewer to sense absent realities without being able to fully grasp them. These images are a testimony to Alonso’s conception of the journey in terms of understanding, learning and caesura in moments of vital overload. This same conception pervades Alonso’s 2019 pilgrimage to Shikoku in Japan and her second Way of Saint James in the summer of 2022, the latter organised during the preparations for this exhibition to reunite the artist with her former self and add another chapter to the continuum of paths that she has passed through and will be travelling throughout her life. The existence of the cyanotypes is also a sign of Alonso’s victory over herself, of her triumph in the struggle to bring herself back to the here and now.

ELIA TORRECILLA (B. 1984)

It is not easy to establish whether the Galician creator and researcher Elia Torrecilla is an artist who walks, a walker who makes art, or both, depending on the moment. Her work combines, explores and tests these two concepts, in a continuous process of experimenting with their limits and potential.

Torrecilla practices a *flânerie* with a certain Fluxus spirit that draws on nineteenth-century Parisian influences, surrealist wanderings, and Situationist drifts and psychogeographies, fluctuating between their various postulates and ideas in order to apply them to contemporary life and art, in a desire to vindicate their validity and relevance. Her curiosity is mainly oriented towards urban environments – understood as a set of tangible and intangible, animate and inanimate elements – and she pays special attention to everything that is located in liminal spaces, whether they are cracks, decontextualised objects or transitions between light and shadow. For the artist, “walking is an act of resistance, and entering into the cracks means immersing myself in a world of encounters and possibilities.” These real and figurative cracks, as thresholds, are located between the rules that govern the intermediate stages that precede and succeed them, but escape the dictates of both, thus opening the door to discovery, chance, estrangement and wonder. As a contemporary *flâneuse* herself, she is aware of moving on the margins of a traditionally masculine artistic and cultural phenomenon, the product of a society that grants different freedoms in the use of public space according to gender.

La ciudad intermedia (2021) is the name of a group of works and actions carried out by the artist thanks to the III Boomerang Grant from the Miguel Hernández University of Elche, which culminated in an exhibition with the same title. Through videos, photographs and found and modified objects, Torrecilla shares her exploratory experiences – playful and detective-like at the same time – of everyday spaces that are revisited with an inquisitive and poetic gaze.

The footwear that makes walking possible and mediates between the city and the walker is one of the recurring elements in her work. Thus, a projection shows the path traced by a pair of shoes along a line of shadow, shoes that appeared abando-

ned next to a bin and were worn by the artist until one half was darker than the other, prolonging the dividing line between light and shadow on her feet. The installation is completed with a row of shoes, also found and painted longitudinally in black and white, evoking in the room the line that appears in the projection, and inviting the spectator to meditate on their materiality, their metonymic and symbolic potential to allude to absent beings and their function as a propitiator of movement on foot.

On the other hand, the city also offers unexpected aesthetic opportunities, as in the case of the scraps of paper or plastic that Torrecilla tracks down in non-useful corners of the urban fabric – wedged behind pipes, forgotten in holes in walls – and which she compiles and reconfigures into bricks or other material fragments as small sculptures formed by unintentional collective contributions. This is an infinite and permanently unfinished work that makes Torrecilla find herself in perpetual transit and dialogue: she defines her artistic practice as “a *walk in progress*, and a *work in process*, because I understand that the path and the process are what is important.”

IRENE GRAU (B. 1986)

The Valencian artist irene grau focuses her work around two fundamental axes: walking and nature. Defined as a “conceptual pleinairist”, grau uses walking as a tool of discovery and knowledge production, exploring and researching in the field before subjecting her work to a period of technical and conceptual refinement and deepening in the studio. Her fascination with the processes of artistic creation also stems from her interest in the landscape and its constant change, which drives her to constantly experiment with different solutions to new questions and challenges.

In autumn 2017, a wave of fires ravaged several areas of Portugal and the autonomous communities of Asturias and Galicia, where grau had been living since 2016. These events had a profound impact on her, and during a walk through the Tourón forest in Ponte Caldelas – one of the most affected areas, where 2,900 hectares of the municipality’s 8,700 hectares were burnt – the artist decided to collect some of the ash from the charred trees. This very personal action gave rise a year later to *on what is left*, an extensive and prolonged creative project, the result of which is a series of monochrome paintings of different sizes.

on what is left does not only allude to the ashes of nature destroyed by fire. Starting from this concept, grau’s research encompassed different techniques – water, latex, varnish – that took away part of the material, reducing it, to finally use *what is left* in her painting. In this sense, grau’s methodology served as a still with which to distil the final material she would use on the canvas. The pictorial process was carried out horizontally and on the floor of the studio, that is, on the same spatial plane from which grau extracted the ashes that make up the works; these, in turn, all share a vertical format as an echo of the slender, upright thickness of trees that no longer exist. Using tools that went beyond the pictorial field, such as a mop, the artist also incorporated a performative dimension into the execution.

On the other hand, *on what is left* is not only an emotional response of the artist to an ecological tragedy, but also a political, economic and to some extent social critique. The complexity of the socio-economic panorama that leads to intentional and uncontrolled burning, to the depopulation of the territory but, above all, to the repopulation with non-native species to the detriment of the native Atlantic forest for the sake of business

profit, are scourges to which the ashes of Tourón point an accusing finger. grau's monochromes, however, do not dwell on these factors or on the violence against the landscape, but stoically present themselves to the viewer with the same serene and silent dignity with which the blackened trunks of the forest rise up after the deafening passage of fire. *on what is left* conveys sobriety and respect, but also a mute and desolate terror resulting from the awareness of knowing that such a creative act was born out of the almost absolute annihilation – in its etymological meaning of “reducing to nothing”, conceptually and materially – of a natural environment that is everyone's heritage.

ISMAEL TEIRA (B. 1987)

Compostela: camiños do desexo (2008–11) is a project initiated in Santiago de Compostela with a second part in Valencia (2012–present). Teira says that desire paths – a term widely used in urban planning that is as poetic as it is descriptive – “propose the shortest or simplest route between an origin and a destination, and are sometimes understood as shortcuts”. These are understood as alternative paths to those officially established by urban planning or landscape design, laid out by users of public space with the aim of taking the quickest, shortest and most efficient route to save time. They are manifestations of an individual pragmatism that becomes collective through the asynchronous accumulation of actions, and is only visible when they are carried out on land susceptible to erosion. By stepping off the paths designed for them, users invent new routes, subvert existing ones and tacitly rebel against decisions about which they have not been consulted.

Intrigued by these “social creations that respond to the needs of the group”, between 2008 and 2011 Teira set out to investigate and document this phenomenon in the urban green spaces of Santiago de Compostela. The result is an archive of images mapping the approximately 100 metres of shortcuts scattered around the city. As in *Postal de París* (Page 120), Teira's desire paths are always empty, uninhabited, evoking a feeling of loneliness and helplessness. Despite the frugality of specific indications in the photographs, the images captured by the artist make it possible to identify the different areas of Santiago where they were taken, inviting the viewer who knows the city to locate them on their mental map and, perhaps, to recognise themselves as a passer-by and agent of one or more of these paths. The result of the research was published in 2011 as an artist's book with the same title.

NINA SALSOTTO CASSINA (B. 1989)

Ceramist Nina Salsotto Cassina is an earthenware and clay collector. Her project *Unurgent Argilla* (Unurgent Clay) – which combines the Italian word for “clay” with a non-existent word in English to convey the opposite of “urgency”, “immediacy” or “haste” – began in London in 2019 as a desire to “investigate places through materials and their aesthetics” and as a result of the artist's fascination with the geology of the UK during her many walks and hikes. The name of her artistic project is also a manifesto advocating resistance to the speed imposed by contemporary society, a recognition of the long amount of time required for modelling or lathe work.

Salsotto Cassina's return to her native Italy during the Covid-19 pandemic was a re-encounter with a territory that had profound emotional implications. Since 2020, the artist has been mapping both volcanic islands and mountain peaks through her ceramics,

and extracting materials during her walks in environments as diverse as the surroundings of Milan and the Alpes-Maritimes mountain range, the region where she grew up.

In her ceramics, Salsotto Cassina uses wild clays, i.e. not purchased commercially but hand-picked directly from nature. The use of this type of clay is not a recent discovery, as all pottery vessels were originally produced using materials characteristic of a particular area. However, the industrial manufacturing of clays has gradually displaced this once predominant practice, so that today it is atypical to find potters working in this way.

The artist's creative process begins, like that of so many walkers, with a map. These maps are tools for planning for the future but look into the past, as they take the form of geological or archaeological charts and provide information on the mineral composition of the soil of a site to be explored. Once the destination has been selected and she has a rough idea of what she might find, Salsotto Cassina goes to the site and personally collects as much clay as she is able to transport on her own – sometimes from the same road she is travelling on – in order to limit her impact on the land.

Back in the studio, the alchemy begins. Every extraction of materials is a game of Russian roulette, as the usability of a clay involves many variables ranging from the temperature to which it can be subjected or its porosity, to its ductility on the lathe or its level of purity. For the artist, “it is a continuous learning process that is applicable to other materials, but each one is totally unique and requires your full attention.” Sustainability is also an important factor for Salsotto Cassina, who fires each piece only once to minimise energy consumption.

The ceramics resulting from her experiments are all spherical in shape, establishing a continuity and visual coherence in her work. Similar, but not identical, each and every one of her pieces holds the memory of the artist's experience and the traces of a materiality defined by a specific environment to which they are indissolubly linked. They are both autobiographical and geo-localised works that she defines as “round, wild, austere”.

MIGUEL SBASTIDA (B. 1989)

In April 2016, the Madrid artist Miguel Sbastida travelled to Alaska to encounter a frozen and unknown landscape. His destination was the Mendelhall Glacier, part of the Tongass National Forest, located just over 20 kilometres from Juneau, in the southeast of the region.

Walk Like a Glacier was a performance and research carried out by the artist during that trip. It consisted of walking up to the glacier, picking up the largest chunk of ice he was able to carry and, after tying it on his back, starting a descent to the glacial lake at the base and depositing it in the water.

Seemingly simple, Sbastida's action contains a multitude of readings and reflections ranging from the physical to the spiritual and from the individual to the global. Moving over terrain that one does not normally walk over involves a re-evaluation of the physical act of walking, a renewed awareness of weights and footsteps, of creaks, sounds and potential hazards underfoot. Beyond oneself, walking in such an environment means accepting modifying it irrevocably and embracing the subtle act of appropriation that implies leaving the imprint of a presence.

Walk Like a Glacier was also conceived as a crossroads between a pilgrimage, a procession and a protest march. Considering the pilgrimage as an initiatory journey motivated by a desire for purification, expiation or self-knowledge, not without its difficulties and with a specific destination, undergoing a prolonged walk with a piece of ice attached to the body took on penitential overtones – Complete with bodily marks derived from the weight of the block hanging from the artist's shoulders by means of a cotton string – and provoked in Sbastida a state of mind similar to meditation. Likewise, the fact of taking a route decided in advance, carrying a valuable and scarce element such as water, in silence, with solemnity and respect, brought *Walk Like a Glacier* closer to a secular, almost pantheistic procession, governed by its own liturgy – in this case, four rules or instructions and a single question: how does a glacier walk?

The walk also aimed to denounce the degradation of the natural environment caused by human beings precisely through a degradation, fortunately on a smaller scale, produced by another human being. The melting of the ice in contact with the heat of the artist's body thus became a metaphor for the destructive impact that humanity is having on the environment.

The poetic force of the action, however, did not stop there: at the end of the journey, two hours later, Sbastida had covered a distance of 3.8 kilometres to deposit the piece of glacier in an area that was still covered with ice in 1989, when he was born. Between that year and 2016, the glacier had retreated 1.9 kilometres. In that couple of hours, the block had lost around a third of its volume; under normal conditions it would have taken 56 years to move from its original location to that point.

Walk Like a Glacier is a climatic emergency condensed in time and space, comparatively small but powerfully evocative, whose limited destruction aspires to avoid witnessing absolute devastation.

JULIAN OPIE (N. 1958)

Julian Opie is usually associated with the New British Sculpture movement that emerged out of the British art scene in the 1980s, featuring artists such as Antony Gormley and Anish Kapoor. However, Opie's artistic interests transcend sculpture to include formats such as drawing, painting, serigraphy, video and much more. Together with traditional media, his work is characterised by the endless exploration of new technologies, from the first computer animations to LED and 3D printing.

Opie studied at the University of Oxford and Goldsmiths College, London, where he trained under and assisted Michael Craig-Martin. This took place only a few years before the rise of the generation known as the Young British Artists (YBA), who shared the same mentor. While Opie was never part of this group, which formed around the gallery owner Charles Saatchi, he has been a leading member of the British art establishment since around that time and has moved in a similar direction, becoming, like the YBA, a symbol of "Cool Britannia" in the late 1990s.

At the start of this century, his fame exceeded the boundaries of the art world when he worked with Blur, designing the cover for their compilation album *Blur: The Best of* (2000), and U2, who used Opie's LED projections as part of the staging for their *Vertigo* tour in 2006. He is one of the most recognised and prestigious names in contemporary art, with his work featuring in collections and exhibitions worldwide, and in many public spaces.

Ever since his student days in the 1970s, he has been influenced by the dominant artistic trends, such as Conceptual Art, Minimalism and late Pop Art, through artists such as Patrick Caulfield and Craig-Martin, of whom Opie could be considered a direct heir. He has cited other influences, such as the art of primitive cultures (including Egyptian art), Ukiyo-e, manga and the comics of Hergé with their clear lines. He has also frequently declared his fascination with signs in all their dimensions, from hieroglyphs to the anonymous figures on the doors of public conveniences and emergency exits. This amalgamation of influences crystallises in work that seeks to create a universal language, in which the motifs (landscapes, everyday objects, animals and, in particular, human figures) are reduced to their essential lines – the minimum expression needed for the viewer to understand them.

In the 1990s and 2000s, his work was populated with figures often described as "bubble-heads", due to the reduction of this part of the body to a simple circle floating above the character's shoulders. These figures are portraits of real people, whose names are used in the title of the piece: Kiera, for example, was an assistant from his studio. Opie starts with photographs and videos that he simplifies on his computer screen until he distils the essential lines. He dedicates complete series to each character employing various media. The use of LED in *This is Kiera Walking* evokes advertising posters and road signs in a deliberate attempt to erase the barriers between Art and graphic design. This technology provides him with an innovative way of introducing movement into a two-dimensional work, simulating a perpetual, suspended walk without involving actual movement. The personality of the protagonist – who has no other defining traits – is reflected through her posture and body movement, which is highly stylised and, although simple, glamorous and enticing.

ANA FERNÁNDEZ (N. 1968)

The Galician artist Ana Fernández graduated in Fine Arts from the University of Castilla La Mancha in 1993, where she also completed her doctoral studies, and was awarded the Marcelino Botín Foundation's Visual Arts Scholarship in 1999.

Her series *Aeropuerto*, from 1998, presents six black and white photographs showing different individuals, taken in profile, walking through a large open space. The title of the work indicates that it is an aerodrome, but the images do not offer any spatial reference to place them in a specific context.

Fernández conceives photography as a technique that allows us to alter and simulate reality rather than simply capturing it objectively. The production of the pieces was therefore carried out in two phases, with a first taking of stolen photographs of unknown people walking in public spaces and a second phase of manipulation and editing of the negatives in the laboratory, which accentuated the anonymity of the subjects and gave the series an aesthetic coherence and a rhythm reminiscent of a film sequence. The portrayal of the same repeated action – walking – but photographed at different moments, aseptically, with the same framing and at the same distance from the subject, is subtly reminiscent of Eadweard Muybridge's studies of movement, although in this case different individuals are interposed to reconstitute the various stages of a step.

Airports and stations are paradigms of non-places, enclosures conceived on the basis of flows, whether of people or goods. Fernández's photographs freeze the movement of beings in transit

through a space conceived for travel and non-permanence. Paradoxically, they immortalise an ephemeral action executed in a place characterised by transience. The lack of sharpness of the images emphasises this movement over the corporeality of its agents, who seem to dilute as they change position. Their faces are deliberately blurred before the viewer's eyes, and while it can be deduced that they are middle-class travellers, their identities and motivations are irrelevant. The origins and destinations of their movements do not matter either: in the present when the images were taken, they all shared the same activity, and the absence of any other information or anecdote puts the focus precisely on this. The nondescript nature of their anonymity and the universality of their gait, together with their considerable size, make these shadows subjects to be recognised and potentially identified with.

ADRIAN PACI (N. 1969)

Albanian artist Adrian Paci trained as a painter in Tirana and worked as a teacher of art and aesthetics in Shkoder until 1997, when the instability of his country prompted him to settle permanently in Milan. This experience left a deep mark on his life and his work, which often revolves around exile, loss, separation, nostalgia, belonging or displacement. He acknowledges that "the fact of being at a crossroads, on the border between two different identities, underlies all my video work."

After these clearly self-referential beginnings, in recent decades Paci's work has gradually distanced itself from his personal experience to open up the focus, concentrating on broader questions, such as collective history, the configuration of individual and community identity or the impact of socio-economic factors on certain human groups. His work often focuses on everyday aspects, using them as an avenue to explore the effects of diverse contexts on people and the interconnection between life and art.

Centro di permanenza temporanea (Temporary Detention Centre) revolves around several of these themes. The video shows a group of migrant workers, men and women, lining up on an airport runway to climb the stairs to an aircraft. One by one, passengers slowly but inexorably make their way up the steps of the structure, crowding together at the top and accumulating in several rows. Their faces have patient, inquisitive and expectant expressions. When the frame opens, viewers discover that the plane they were supposed to board does not exist. Other aeroplanes manoeuvre along the adjacent runways, their engines running as a soundtrack, but none come to pick them up.

The piece was filmed at the San Jose airfield in California and did not use professional actors but real temporary workers, some of them illegal, hired specifically for this piece – a practice that Paci frequently employs. The constructed narrative of the video thus intermingles with the personal narratives of the men and women portrayed in it: Where are they heading? Is it a one-way or a return trip? Is it voluntary or imposed by circumstances? The *in medias res* beginning and the open ending reflect Paci's interest in transitional stages and no-man's lands: "I became interested in these in-between spaces, in these moments when something is completely losing its identity and entering a new dimension without reaching another identity altogether. *Centro di permanenza temporanea* is about this in-between space, and of course it is about migration, but not just about migration."

Unsurprisingly, the title of the work – which translates literally as *Centre for Temporary Permanence* – is taken from the

detention centres for refugees and illegal immigrants in Italy, and highlights the oxymoron that a stay can at the same time be transitory, a designation as absurd as a aircraft steps that lead nowhere. The line of migrants trying to board an absent plane is simple, poetic and powerfully poignant in its relevance, despite the fact that the piece was made almost fifteen years ago. Their walk to nowhere raises universal questions about migration, mobility and globalisation, and proof of its timeliness is that a screenshot of the video circulated online in 2021, falsely presented as an example of international neglect in the face of the Afghan population's desperation to flee Kabul after the Taliban came to power. The piece is an invitation to reflect on welcome and rejection, on the hope placed on unrealised journeys, on the futility and frustration of walking towards goals that are perhaps beyond our reach due to factors that do not depend on us but that condition us all the same.

JEPPE HEIN (N. 1974)

The work of the Danish artist Jeppe Hein draws influences from trends such as minimalism and conceptual art of the 1970s, while combining disciplines such as architecture, sculpture and installation. His use of technology and his keen sense of humour give rise to pieces in which surprise, sensory stimulation and spectator participation play a fundamental role.

At first glance, Hein's works appear simple, but this soon proves to be deceptive: many of them react to human presence. In his own words: "I want to show that the work is nothing by itself, it's just what the audience does with it. The role of the spectator places the focus of attention on the piece." This is an artist for whom it is absolutely essential to have an audience because without it his work often cannot even be materially activated, thus removing any hierarchy between creators and receivers.

Hein's carefree and interactive approach can be found in both *Reflecting Object* and *Moving Bench #2*. The first piece consists of an innocuous polished metal sphere that, true to its title, reflects the space and the people around it. Its surface reflects the image of what is in front of it, projecting the view of the beholder in all directions except towards itself. The second appears to be an ordinary bench placed in the gallery to enable visitors to rest. However, both works move unexpectedly, changing position autonomously thanks to internal motors that are activated under certain circumstances. For example, *Moving Bench #2* only starts up when it detects the weight of visitors as they sit down, moving them from one place to another in a linear trajectory that changes their perception of space. Meanwhile, *Reflecting Object* rolls randomly across the floor of the room, acting as both an obstacle and a guide to the intrigued visitors who encounter it and, bewildered, hesitate between chasing it or moving out of its way.

These movements through the gallery space of objects that would not normally move, catch visitors off guard and modify their behaviour, inviting them to interact with their surroundings: "For me, the concept of sculpture is closely related to that of communication... By challenging the spectator's physical attention, an active dialogue is established between the work, the environment and other visitors, which gives sculpture a social quality," says Hein. The artist therefore conceives his works with a plurality in mind: his benches, mirrors, spheres, globes and labyrinths are designed to be experienced in the company of others, thus creating opportunities for encounter, exchange and fun.

At the same time, these pieces conceptually and playfully question the immobility and stillness of the museum environment, where the usual rules of conduct impose a walking cadence characterised by staccato and ritual pause. When a work moves, the rhythm is no longer only chosen by the visitor, but is the result of a symbiosis between the movement of the piece and that of the spectator. The work thus invades a field of action that traditionally did not belong to it: even today, it is still almost exclusively the audience who moves. From this point of view, Hein's work offers a perfect integration of space, movement and art.

CLARA MONTOYA (N. 1974)

A multidisciplinary creator with an inquisitive and restless gaze, the Madrid artist Clara Montoya's work often poses questions that she wishes to unravel or approaches that challenge established notions. Her work is characterised by pieces that combine lyricism and conceptual complexity with a synthetic vocabulary and minimalist, material finishes.

Nómada was filmed on a sunny day in 2006 in the plains of Ocaña, Toledo, with the intention of capturing the act of walking on the horizon line. To carry out her performance, Montoya devised a turning base to hold a camera rotating slowly at a constant speed, selected a suitable location and calculated – using a satellite map of the area – the diameter of the circumference she would have to trace to ensure that the distance between her and the camera dwarfed her enough, so that the only thing noticeable was her movement. The result was a one-hour walk over little more than three kilometres, walking at a steady pace and being guided by walkie-talkies to stay on track.

The performance executed in 2006 is one of the multiple elements that make up *Nómada*, given that the work, in fact, is a self-referential travelling piece in which staging plays a fundamental role: its exhibition requires a circular screen and a rotating projector, recreating the conditions of the original performance in order to introduce it, on a smaller scale, into the exhibition space. A tiny image of the artist runs around the circumference of the screen in a looping projection, so small that you can barely make out a dark moving blob of colour interrupting the intersection between the blue of the sky and the gold of the fields. The figure moves forward with determination and haste, never stopping, and that is all we are allowed to know about it: it is a person walking between heaven and earth.

Nómada lives up to its name by never standing still: the black pixels that walk on the Toledan horizon are nomads, as is the projection that surrounds the spectator when they enter the circumference delimited by the screen; perhaps, the audience could also be a nomad if they decide to follow Montoya in her walk around the room.

Also linked to cartography – or the lack of it – and to territory, *Nómadas* is a piece of digital art that “walks” virtually. Using an open-source geolocation platform called OpenStreetCam – now renamed KartaView – the work consists of a computer programme that takes images posted by users and rearranges them, creating a random, impossible and unrepeatable journey. The itinerary of *Nómadas* does not follow any existing map or route, but jumps from one place to another, from one climate, month or time of day to completely different ones. Thus, their journey is only plausible in a digital space. Moreover, unlike KartaView or other similar tools, *Nómadas* does not propose any interaction

with the user, but rather offers a sequence of still images that mark a single journey. This unidirectional, artificial and potentially infinite narrative is generated from a multiplicity of anonymous and misplaced contributions: the programme juxtaposes the photographs without their capture or provenance information, creating a rhythm that is hypnotic and disorienting, but also intriguing. The discrepancies between the points of view, the journeys chosen or even the technical expertise invite us to play guessing games and to reflect on the perception of the territory when we have no reference points, while at the same time acting as subtle reminders that behind the images there are individuals with their own personalities who at a given moment decided to document their paths in order to share them with others.

JESÚS SOTO (1923–2005)

The Venezuelan artist Jesús Rafael Soto was an important figure in twentieth-century Latin American art and a key representative of op art – short for optical art – and kinetic art.

Born in Ciudad Bolívar and trained at the Caracas School of Art, he moved permanently to Paris in 1950, where he began to experiment with perception and optical illusions. However, the artist soon realised that his first steps in this field, still very much indebted to his pictorial training, were insufficient. The dilemma Soto encountered was that neither op art nor most of the kinetic art practised by his contemporaries answered the questions that interested him. On the one hand, op art used effects that tricked the eye to generate an illusion of movement or spatiality, without both dimensions necessarily being part of the piece. On the other hand, kinetic art sought to incorporate movement into works, often using mechanical elements. Soto, in turn, neither wished to resort to machines nor to remain on the surface of the optical illusion produced by a static work, so he decided to orient his artistic practice towards the real integration of movement, space, time and interactivity.

Initially described as “enveloping works”, the Penetrables series began in 1967 and represents the synthesis of the artist's research into light, movement and space. They consist of thin flexible PVC pipes suspended from the ceiling and falling vertically over a given area, often of large dimensions and rectangular or square in shape. Many, like this *Penetrable* from 1982, are monochrome, while in others the PVC pipes are totally or partially coloured, creating in the latter case geometric shapes that seem to be inside the pieces. The impression of solidity and mass that they project from afar is diluted when approaching and penetrating them, as their name suggests. According to Soto: “In the Penetrables, the spectator crosses vertical ropes or bars that fill the entire available space and constitute the work. From that moment on, the spectator and the work are physically and indissolubly intertwined.” It is precisely this possibility of merging with the work that makes the Penetrables such interesting pieces, given that to truly apprehend them requires a conscious action on the part of the audience. The Penetrables are only complete when this sensory experience is superimposed with the illusion perceived by the mind of the passer-by, and therefore do not fully exist without an audience interacting with them.

In parallel to this, the Penetrables offer a fully immersive experience that demands not only the audience's movement but also their time. They are expected to interact with the piece, to touch it, to enter and leave it, to contemplate it from different angles

and, in short, to perceive it as a whole through their mind and body. Soto's great achievement was to take the transformation of the spectator into a participant to its ultimate consequences. In the artist's own words, the Penetrables are both "the revelation of sensory space" and the culmination of "a universe full of relationships".

JOHN M. ARMLEDER (N. 1948)

John M. Armleder is an artist whose work resists classification. Born and settled in Switzerland, he studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Geneva, where he founded the Ecart Group with his two childhood friends, fellow artists Patrick Lucchini and Claude Rychner, in 1969. Ecart – the name of both the group and the subsequent art gallery founded in 1973 – held exhibitions and publications, and throughout the 1970s promoted the work of artists who are now internationally renowned.

Influenced by the spirit of Fluxus – an artistic phenomenon that emerged in the 1960s and is still alive today – and fascinated by the work of the musician and composer John Cage, Armleder's output ranges from performances and installations to paintings, drawings and sculptures. His most recent works are characterised by eclecticism and are extraordinarily different from one another, which reaffirms the artist's resistance to identify himself with a particular artistic movement. Perhaps what remains constant throughout his long career is his curiosity to explore the interconnection between life and art, as well as a desire to challenge, often in a playful spirit, the conventions of categorisation and display. Chance and accidents also figure prominently in his creative process, a characteristic that again connects him to Fluxus.

Global Domes XII belongs to a series that began in 1998. It is a light-hearted, sensory installation that takes everyday objects – in this case, 12 disco balls – and inserts them into a museum hall. This action singles them out, inviting visitors to focus on their aesthetic qualities and the impact they have on the environment. In fact, its position at eye level rather than hanging high from the ceiling – as would be expected of a disco ball in the context of a party – puts the focus on the objects and their materiality, allowing for a detailed examination of their surface. Their rotating movements, slow and autonomous thanks to 12 motors, transform the architecture of the room and the visitors' perception of it, creating a constantly changing atmosphere according to the fluctuations of the light.

On the other hand, the reflective surface of the balls is reminiscent of the convex mirrors of the Renaissance or the distorting mirror galleries of fairground attractions, adding another layer of alteration to the viewer's vision. This play of perceptions, with its illusions and its limits, finds in the disco ball a happy amalgam of contradictions that Armleder summarises as "a combination of pure forms and motion, a sphere covered with a multitude of square elements, a spinning movement of a steady object, creating by its reflections an unsteady spatial setting."

At the same time, the arrangement of the balls in two rows of six generates a corridor and consequently an axis designed explicitly to be walked, to be experienced as well as observed. The installation thus becomes an immersive and interactive environment: the spectator can enter the room and, thanks to their own physicality, fleetingly alter the piece, since the light

projected on their body is temporarily no longer projected on the background. Walking through the interior of *Global Domes XII* means succumbing to the charm of its lighting effects and is probably the closest thing to getting lost inside a kaleidoscope.

CRISTINA IGLESIAS (N. 1956)

The San Sebastian-born artist Cristina Iglesias studied ceramics and drawing in Barcelona before continuing her training in sculpture at the Chelsea School of Arts in London. She represented Spain at the Venice Biennale in 1986 and 1993 and at the Architecture Biennale in 2012, received the National Award for Fine Arts in 1999 and the Gold Medal for Services to the Visual Arts in 2015.

Iglesias uses materials such as concrete, iron, glass, alabaster and resin in her works. They are combined with various techniques. The contrast of their qualities and surfaces allows the artist to explore her interest in themes such as space, literature and architecture.

Indeed, the latter is one of the disciplines that most often recurs in her career, so much so that she received the Royal Academy Award for Architecture in London in 2020. Her lattices and corridors, as well as her interventions in public spaces, speak of spaces and passages, of relational and liminal spaces, of interstices: "I like the spaces between buildings – the alleys, forums and squares – as well as the thresholds (...) The act of going, of wanting to go and walk towards something, to cross something in the city, that's part of the work, as well as the experience of being in it, around it, beside it." Iglesias envisions her interventions in a holistic way that includes the physical works, as well as the space they occupy and do not occupy, the air around them, and the beings who will interact with them.

In parallel to the above, Iglesias is an artist who declares: "I love walking, I even make works that imply walking or that the path is part of them." Her vegetation rooms and labyrinths bear witness to this and in a way reflect her personal view of walking: "I like to walk in the countryside, in the mountains and even in the desert. I like it because of the walking itself and because you feel awakened. It's a way to go inside yourself and reflect." According to the above, walking is both a sensory pleasure and a method for self-knowledge. This may have led to her embracing the idea that her work is a journey that people take from the moment they first encounter a piece until the end of their experience. Her art also embeds rhythm, succession and a contemplative and drawn-out state that requires dedication and time: "That's also the interesting thing about the challenge of creating a work: that you have to be aware that the viewer might be in a hurry. I do not make work that does not care about the viewer, quite the opposite: my work is very concerned with how it is perceived, and I am very interested in the sequential factor, which means that you have to walk through the work because you will never see it in its entirety, you have to engage with it. (...) And that's what I am interested in, the fact that you have to take your time with it."

The public must be complicit in Iglesias' suspended corridors because, as their title indicates, they were designed to be walked through, surrounded, and experienced with the body. It is an experience that requires slow movements at walking pace to discover that the panels of these fictitious and seemingly ethereal architectures are made up of lattices of letters that form words,

words that in turn constitute a text. The artist states: "I am interested in activating the spectator mentally as well as physically (...) I love to create spaces for thinking, and that is linked with the literary, which has all that narrative that takes you to places you've never been." In this instance, literature is literally imbricated – that is the best way to put it – inside the work, making it possible for the visitor to wander through it and become involved in a play with light and shadow, open and closed spaces, visible and hidden messages. Without the visitor's active participation, the effect would not be as effective or appreciable.

DORA GARCÍA (N. 1965)

Born in Valladolid and trained in Salamanca, the artist Dora García moves with ease between different media, ranging from drawing, sculpture and photography to installation and performance. Her work explores the dynamics between artist, work and spectator and often gives a prominent role to the interaction with the viewer.

In *Instant Narrative (IN)*, the artist uses the museum space to investigate the relationship between the audience, the space and the work. On one of the gallery walls, a projector shows the screen of a computer located somewhere along the exhibition route, with no obvious connection to what is being projected. In front of that computer, a person surreptitiously observes everything that happens, describes it and turns it into a story that appears on the wall as it is being written. This text constructed in real time traces, among other actions, the movements of people.

To a certain extent, the piece functions as a mirror of words, but a subjective mirror that returns to the visitor his or her own image filtered through the vision of the other, who in this case is a narrator. García's fascination with textuality, literature and the impact of language is a constant in her work, and *Instant Narrative* offers the audience the opportunity to become a character for a limited time and in a limited space. As in literary fiction, the characters who populate the universe of the piece are not asked if they want to be part of it, nor if they are uncomfortable with the voyeuristic exercise to which they are subjected.

On the other hand, *Instant Narrative* could be understood as a work with a narrator and infinite performers. García creates an environment and defines parameters, but then disappears behind the scenes to hand over the stage to the individuals who appear in the field of vision of the person sitting in front of the computer. The artist indeed facilitates, but immediately delegates the executive role to actors who are not aware that they are acting.

Devised as a piece that puts the focus on the audience, *Instant Narrative* requires visitors to activate and generate a story that the performer can capture in the projection. Although the insertion of the installation along the exhibition route forces the visitor to be part of the work, it is up to them to become involved in the narrative beyond simply passing through the room.

In this sense, the work offers a delicate balance of power. On the one hand, the performer is the one who decides about whom and in what order they will write depending on what captures their attention at any given moment, so one could think that they hold the role of demiurge and, logically, control the situation. However, without the presence of at least one other person in

the room, the projection is mute: the performer needs auditory and visual stimuli to describe and document, and in the controlled and stable environment of the museum these come mostly from visitors. A mutual dependence is thus established between the work and its recipients, since the participatory violence that the former exercises on the latter is only executable insofar as the latter make the existence of the former possible. In this way, *Instant Narrative* is a perfect example of the invitation to complicity on the part of the audience and their fundamental role in making the piece happen.