

# Antoni Tàpies

Nov 8, 2019 – Jan 10, 2020

Quai des Bergues 15-17

Geneva

Opening Reception:

Thursday, Nov 7

6–8 PM



Above: Antoni Tàpies, *Tenalles blanques*, 2002, paint on canvas, 64" x 102-3/4" (162.6 cm x 261 cm) © 2019 Fundació Antoni Tàpies / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid

Geneva—Pace Gallery is honored to present the first exhibition in its Geneva gallery of works by Antoni Tàpies at Quai des Bergues, 15-17, from 8 November 2019 to 10 January 2020. The exhibition examines Tàpies's central theme of transformation, both physical and spiritual, which he explores through the use of signs and symbols. Organized in collaboration with the estate of the artist, the exhibition marks twenty-seven years of representation of the artist by Pace and is the gallery's tenth solo show of Tàpies works.

'For Tàpies, art is ritual, not commodity. It is not intended to be worshiped, but neither is it meant to decorate or please. The purpose of art, then, is to alter and heighten consciousness, bringing us into contact in the most powerful way with reality, not as it is pictured but as it literally exists in time and space, a constant reminder of our own mortality and of man's inability to tame and civilize a base and violent nature. In this series of recent paintings, one sees Tàpies in full possession of his powers.' Barbara Rose, 'Painter, Poet, Visionary' in *Antoni Tàpies at 80*, 2003.

Over nearly seven decades, Tàpies—both artist and influential philosopher of art—created a prolific and singular body of work that redefined painting and the way colors and physicality are manifested through the medium, thereby influencing future generations of artists and fascinating curators and museums around the world. This notable legacy has been memorialized and expanded upon through the work of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, which, along with the Fundació Joan Miró and Museu Picasso, completes the trio of museums representing Barcelona's century of major contributions to painting and the development of 20th century art.

Works in the exhibition span two decades, ranging in date from 1990 to 2008, and include both paintings and works on paper, highlighting the artist's constant experimentation with materials. Emblematic of this experimentation is *Colador i Tassa* (1998), a richly textured painting on wood comprised of both conventional painting materials as

well as the everyday objects from which the work gets its name: a cup and a tea strainer. The piece was included in major museum retrospectives including *Antoni Tàpies: Retrospective* at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (2004), which then traveled to the Museo de Arte de Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico (2005); the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2005); and the Singapore Art Museum (2005). This painting was also included in *From Within*, presented at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies and, as a testament to the importance of Tàpies in Spain, at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona (2013), an institution that only very rarely exhibits contemporary art. *From Within* later traveled to the Pérez Art Museum, Miami (2015).

Tàpies refined a visual language inspired by a wide range of sources that coalesce into a complex fusion of materials, gestures, and symbols originating mainly from his native Catalonia and studies of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. Symbols such as the “t” may reflect ideas of resistance, mystery and the unknown, or, more simply, may refer to the first letter of the artist’s name. These symbols are prevalent in *Plat blanc* (2008), *Signes blaus* (2008), and *Petita sanguina III* (2000) in the exhibition. Ambiguous but powerful, the use of symbols refers to the natural world and the history of painting.

Tàpies’s work embodies his personal experience and history, and of his native Spain and Catalonia specifically. *Terra del Montseny* (2008), a painting which celebrates Catalonia’s main mountain massif, incorporates dirt from the land around his country home. While the piece demonstrates Tàpies’s striking handling of raw materials, it also instills a strong sense of mystery, symbolism, and reverence for nature. His investigation of forms and matter made him one of the most influential postwar artists.

Tàpies’s first museum retrospective in Switzerland took place in 1962 at the Kunsthaus Zürich. The same year, Tàpies made a 16-meter-long mural in the library of the Business School of St. Gallen. In 1967, the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen devoted a retrospective to the artist. The following year, he executed three large paintings for the Convent of the Capuchins of Sion built by architect Mirco Ravanne. In 1973, Tàpies was the subject of a retrospective at the Musée Rath in Geneva.

**Antoni Tàpies** (b. 1923, Barcelona; d. 2012, Barcelona) is recognized as one of the leading artistic voices to emerge from postwar Europe. Working in parallel with global art movements including Abstract Expressionism, Gutai, Art Informel, Tachisme, and Arte Povera, Tàpies believed that his era required a new kind of existential expression. Influenced by Surrealist methods while a member of the avant-garde *Dau al Set* group in postwar Barcelona, he came to develop a unique form of automatism and to reject representation and the illusionistic picture plane. He incorporated unconventional media such as textiles, straw, detritus, and found objects into his work, accentuating their tactile and material nature. The earthy, distressed surfaces of his works relate to themes of entropy and decay, challenging the viewer to find beauty in what is typically over-looked. Tàpies’s oeuvre resides between figuration and abstraction, matter and mysticism, as manifested through his painting, sculpture, drawing, collage, and printmaking.

His work is included in some of the most significant public collections across the world, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; The Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific

Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, Switzerland; Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence, France; Fundació Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona; Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Kunstmuseum Basel; Kunsthalle Hamburg; Kunsthaus Zürich; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museo de Arte Moderno, São Paulo; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid; Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna; Museo d'Arte Moderna, Venice; Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Ohara Museum of Art, Okayama, Japan; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Iran; and Tate, London.

**Pace** is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace's mission continues to be inspired by our drive to support the world's most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide: two galleries in New York, including its newly opened global flagship gallery at 540 West 25th Street; one in London; one in Geneva; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Hong Kong; and one in Seoul.

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