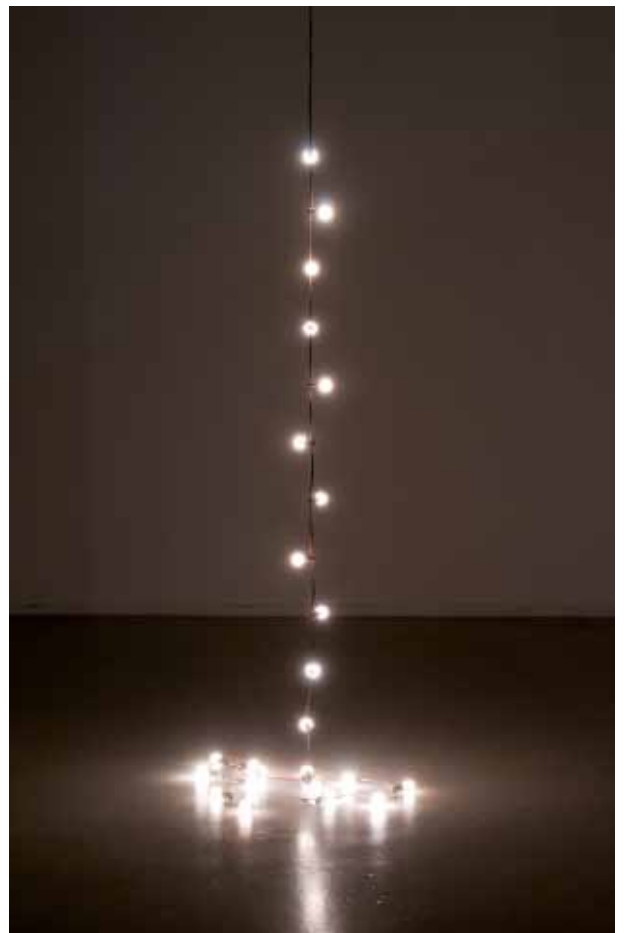# The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

presents on January 31, 2012

The Inverted Mirror

Art from the Collections of
"la Caixa" Foundation and MACBA

The Inverted Mirror:
Art from the Collections of
"la Caixa" Foundation and MACBA

- **Opening and closing dates: January 31 to September 2, 2012**

- **Curator: Álvaro Rodríguez Fominaya**

- **Location: The third floor of the Museum**

- A tour of nearly 100 works by more than 50 international artists from two outstanding contemporary art collections in Europe: Fundación "la Caixa" and the Museu d'art contemporani de Barcelona, MACBA.

- The exhibition explores tendencies and movements that were decisive periods in the development of the visual arts from the late 1940s to the present through works by artists such as Antoni Tàpies, Sigmar Polke, Julian Schnabel, Jeff Wall, Martha Rosler and Michelangelo Pistolletto, among others.

From January 31 to September 2, 2012, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao will be hosting *The Inverted Mirror: Art from the Collections of "la Caixa" Foundation and MACBA*, a superb selection of works belonging to two outstanding contemporary art collections that represent the most significant tendencies and movements spanning the second half of the twentieth century to the present, such as Dau al Set, the El Paso group, the Vancouver School and the Dusseldorf School.

Throughout the Museum's third floor, *The Inverted Mirror* offers visitors a tour of 93 works by 52 artists who worked with various media, especially photography, video and large-format sculpture.

The exhibition is structured around the points of agreement and divergence between the Fundación "la Caixa" and MACBA collections and highlights the art movements that play an outstanding role in both collections, such as the beginning of Art Informel in Spain and the establishment of objectivity as a current in contemporary photography.

The exhibition title derives from Michelangelo Pistoletto's work *Mirror Architecture*, which is featured in the show. The image of a mirror is a metaphor for the processes of accumulation,

transfer and interference that are a fundamental part of the birth and development of all art collections. In connection with its title, the show highlights two contemporary art collections located in Barcelona, which are extremely relevant in Europe and are being presented for the first time together outside of their respective venues, in keeping with a collaboration agreement signed in 2010.

Curated by Álvaro Rodríguez Fominaya, Curator of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the exhibition features photographs, paintings, publications, sculptures, installations and videos by 52 celebrated artists such as Antoni Tàpies, Sigmar Polke, Julian Schnabel, Jeff Wall, Martha Rosler, Michelangelo Pistolletto, Thomas Ruff, Gillian Wearing, Bruce Nauman, Andreas Gursky, Martín Chirino and Antonio Saura, among others.

Scope of the exhibition

The nearly one hundred works from the "la Caixa" and MACBA collections that make up this exhibition are spread across 2,000 square meters on the Museum's third floor, a thematic tour in six major sections: *Dau Al Set and El Paso, Function and Reenactment in Photography: Landschaft, Function and Reenactment in Photography: the Self and the Other, The Limits of Performance, The Inverted Mirror,* and *Levity, Gravity and Other Impossibilities.*

Designed specifically for the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, *The Inverted Mirror* exhibition acquires a new dimension in conjunction with the unique, luminous spaces in Frank Gehry's building.

Dau Al Set/El Paso

The exhibition starts in Gallery 304 with two movements that helped renovate the language of art in Spain after the Spanish Civil War: Dau al Set and El Paso. These and other groups that arose in the 1940s and 1950s joined in the debate that was raging on the international art scene.

Dau al Set (1948–1954) was formed in Barcelona around the magazine of the same name. The group originally consisted of several Catalan writers and artists who promoted the project such as Joan Brossa, Modest Cuixart, Joan Ponç, Antoni Tàpies and Joan-Josep Tharrats. Later, a series of artists and art critics, among them Antonio Saura, Juan Eduardo Cirlot, Jorge Oteiza and Alexandre Cirici Pellicer, collaborated with the movement and stimulated the course of contemporary art in Catalonia. Dau al Set was inspired by the Dada and Surrealist movements and especially by Max Ernst, Joan Miró and Paul Klee.

In turn, El Paso was founded in Madrid in 1957 with the adoption of a manifesto that championed freedom for art and artists, among other issues. The most prominent members of this movement, which broke up in 1960, were well-known figures on the international scene such as Antonio Saura, Manuel Millares, Martín Chirino, Rafael Canogar and Manuel Rivera. In the founding manifesto, these artists advocated an austere color palette together with the partial adoption of the aesthetic postulates of Art Informel.

Function and Reenactment in Photography: Landschaft

The exhibition continues in the classical galleries with a series of photographs dedicated to the landscape genre by the Vancouver School, Dusseldorf School and other photographers such as Manolo Laguillo, Jean-Marc Bustamante and Xabier Ribas who were not part of these movements, but shared their philosophy.

The Dusseldorf School encompasses Bernd and Hilla Becher's students at the Dusseldorf Art Academy in the 1970s, including Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth, Alex Hütte and Candida Höfer. These artists adopted the Becher's documentary style, although they added several new features to their photography techniques, such as the treatment of human groups, their relationship to architecture and the detached analysis of the urban landscape. Access to new technologies in photo printing allowed them to create large formats. *Hong Kong Shanghai Bank* (1994) by Andreas Gursky is an exceptional example of corporate architecture; the urban landscapes Thomas Struth created in New York in 1978 are some of the earliest manifestations of the German Objective Photography movement of his generation.

The Vancouver School was constituted by a series of artists who worked in that city during the 1980s and 1990s. By applying cinematic production systems, Jeff Wall, Rodney Graham and Stan Douglas cultivated a film aesthetic in many of their works on various media. One example is *A Hunting Scene* (1994), an unsettling work by Jeff Wall, a pioneer in the use of lights boxes to exhibit his carefully staged tableaux whose themes represent the essence of contemporary society.

Function and Reenactment in Photography: The Self and the Other

In this section, the artists approach portraiture and self-portraiture on the basis of a contemporary perspective and pay special attention to issues such as identity and gender. These works illustrate the way in which the human figure has been portrayed in photography from the late twentieth century until the present. Cindy Sherman, Gillian Wearing, Geneviève Cadieux, Craigie Horsfield and Vanessa Beecroft are a few of the artists that have addressed this genre from different points of view: Vanessa Beecroft's *Black Madonna with Twins* (*Right*), 2006, is a photograph of people who, in being deprived of their uniqueness, are turned into anonymous subjects. In Gillian Wearing's photography from her *Album* series (2003–06), the artist starts out with images of her family to recreate her own self-portrait. On the other hand, in *Hear Me with Your Eyes* (1989), Geneviève Cadieux photographed her sister over the course of several years in order to capture the emotional intensity of the moment. The section also includes a portrait by Rineke Dijkstra from her *Park Portraits* series that shows a teenager in a park in Amsterdam who poses for the photographer.

The Limits of Performance

This section examines the origins of Performance Art in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the many different possibilities and variants of this medium. The MACBA Foundation collection has an outstanding number of works from this artistic genre, which is one of the collection's focal points. Works by acclaimed artists in this discipline such as Vito Acconci, Martha Rosler, Bruce Nauman, Joan Jonas, Francesc Torres, John Baldessari, Àngels Ribé and Fina Miralles, among others, have been selected for this exhibition.

These artists used video, photography and occasionally props to document a medium that encompasses a range of conceptual orientations, including Body Art, feminism in art and the relationship between action and nature. The sarcasm of Martha Rosler's feminist video *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) contrasts with the explicitly political content of the Grup de Treball collective in its photography collage *Itineraries* (1973). Bruce Nauman is fully represented in this exhibition by five works on paper in which the artist used his hands to force a series of gestures.

The Inverted Mirror

Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Mirror Architecture* inspired the exhibition's title and dominates gallery 303, which contains a number of pieces of monumental scale created between 1988 and 1990. These works have in common experimentation through both pictorial and nonpictorial materials, as well as the scale that was used.

In the triptych *Gomme I, III II* (1987), Enzo Cucchi investigated new materials such as latex and metal and thus, incorporated problems that had been exclusive to sculpture until then into pictorial language. In the same way, Julian Schnabel used fabric from army cots to create the four monumental works entitled with words and phrases from the Old Testament that have been selected for this exhibition.

Lastly, Sigmar Polke's *Triptych* (1989), created on the basis of lacquer and paint on transparent fabric, is extraordinarily complemented by Michelangelo Pistoletto's polyptych *Mirror Architecture.*

Levity, Gravity and Other Impossibilities

The notion of gravity and levity is the common denominator of the works in this section, which were created on an array of different formats: a series of sculptures and installations by Ernesto Neto, Gego, Tony Cragg, Damián Ortega and Lothar Baumgartner; a photograph by Francesc Torres; and a painting by Ettore Spalletti. A prominent place in this gallery is occupied by *Square Reticulárea* (1971), a key sculpture in the career of Venezuelan artist Gego, in which she used three-dimensional vectors, mesh and planes. Gego's mathematical roots contrast with the organic nature of Ernesto Neto's installation *Globulocell* (2001), made of Lycra tulle.

In addition to the importance of the formal aspects of many of these creations, this section covers political, social and economic issues, exemplified, for example, in Damián Ortega's piece *One Wrong Move* (1999–2003), in which the artist addresses the oil-based economy of our times.

The collections

"la Caixa" Foundation and MACBA Foundation are two of the most outstanding contemporary art collections in Europe. Isidro Fainé, president of "la Caixa" and "la Caixa" Foundation, and Leopoldo Rodés, president of MACBA Foundation signed a historic agreement in July 2010 in order to combine their collections –it would later encompass the MACBA Consortium, thus creating a highly significant collection of art from the second half of the twentieth century until now. The 5,500 works interrelate and complement each other and include ambitious pieces by internationally celebrated artists such as Pablo Palazuelo, Bruce Nauman, Tony Cragg, Cindy Sherman, Andreas Gursky and Francesc Torres.

Educational spaces

The exhibition is supplemented by several educational spaces that will provide visitors with a better understanding of it through audio-visuals, audio archives, books and texts that offer testimony from the artists in the exhibition who speak about their creative processes, as well as "other looks" at the Fundación "la Caixa" and MACBA collections.

On the occasion of this exhibition, the Guggenheim Museum has organized a conference with the exhibition curator Álvaro Rodríguez Fominaya, who will speak about the exhibition and the Fundación "la Caixa" and MACBA collections, next February 1 at 7 pm in Zero Espazioa (capacity 40 people).

For more information:

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Press Images for
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Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

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High resolution images of the exhibition *The Inverted Mirror: Art from the Collections of "la Caixa" Foundation and MACBA* are available at the FTP service of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao for authorized media only.

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For further information, please contact the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Press Department: tel. +34 944 35 90 08 and email: media@guggenheim-bilbao.es

Andreas Gursky (Leipzig, Germany, 1955)
Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, 1994
Chromogenic print, cibachrome
225.5 x 175 cm (framed)
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Michelangelo Pistoletto (Biella, Italy, 1933)
Mirror Architecture (*Architettura dello Specchio*), 1990
Mirror and golden frame
360 x 800 cm; 2 mirror: 325 x 184 cm; 2 mirrors: 325 x 200 cm; 2 frames: 360 x 201.5 x 10.5 cm
MACBA Collection. Government of Catalonia Art Fund

Vanessa Beecroft (Genoa, Italy, 1969)
Black Madonna with Twins (*Right*), 2006
Digital chromogenic print
230 x 180 cm
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (Guáimaro, Cuba, 1957– Miami, Florida, 1996)
Untitled (*Last Night*), 1993
24 10W/120V satin-white light bulbs, electric wire, transformer
Dimensions variable. Electric wire: 732 cm
MACBA Collection. Fundació Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. Long term loan of Colección Alfonso Pons Soler

Julian Schnabel (New York, 1951)
Against God (*Contro Dio*), 1989
Oil and plaster on cloth
335 x 295 cm
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Sigmar Polke (Oels, Silesia, Germany [now, Olesnica, Poland], 1941–Colonia, Germany, 2010)
Triptych, 1989
Paint and lacquer on canvas
300.5 x 675 cm
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Ernesto Neto (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1964)
Globulocell, 2001
Lycra tulle, polystyrene spheres, and sand
490 x 420 x 230 cm
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Damián Ortega (Mexico City, 1967)
False Movement (*Stability and Economic Growth*) [*Movimiento en falso (estabilidad y crecimiento económico)*], 1999–2003
3 oil barrels, rotatory base with engine, and wooden platform
Diameter: 340 x 300 cm; 300 kg
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Antoni Tàpies (Barcelona, Spain, 1923)
Two Black Crosses (*Dues creus negres*), 1973
Mixed media on canvas
235 x 150 cm
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Miquel Barceló (Felanitx, Majorca, Spain, 1957)
White Table (*La taula blanca*), 1989
Pigment, latex, and other elements on canvas
225 x 5 x 287.5 cm
MACBA Collection. Government of
Catalonia Art Fund. Former Salvador Riera Collection

Antonio Saura (Huesca, Spain, 1930–Cuenca, Spain, 1998)
Large Nude (*Grand nu*), 1960–61
Oil on canvas
195 x 237 cm
Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa" Foundation

Jean-Marc Bustamante (Toulouse, France, 1952)
LP2, 2000
Chromogenic print
227 x 180 cm
MACBA Collection. Fundació Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. Long-term loan of Cal Cego. Collecció d'Art Contemporani

Martha Rosler (Brooklyn, New York, 1943)
Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975
Single-channel video, black-and-white, with sound
6 min 9 s
MACBA Collection. Fundació Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona.
Gift of Rumeu Family

Àngels Ribé (Barcelona, 1943)
Invisible Geometry (3), 1973
Gelatin silver print
2 prints, 43.2 x 60.8 cm each
MACBA Collection. Fundació Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. Gift of Dinath de Grandi de Grijalbo