



## **MADRID REALISTS**

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**9 February to 22 May 2016**

**Curators: Guillermo Solana y María López**

From February to May 2016, the Museum presents an exhibition on a celebrated group of painters and sculptors of the same generation who have lived and worked in Madrid since the 1950s and who are united by their early training, their work and their personal and family ties. While other names are sometimes added, the group to be presented in this exhibition comprises seven artists: Antonio López García (Tomelloso, Ciudad Real, 1936), who was the subject of a monographic exhibition at the Museum in 2011 and who on this occasion is represented by works including previously unexhibited and recently created ones; his wife María Moreno (Madrid, 1933); the sculptors Julio López Hernández (Madrid, 1930) and his brother Francisco (Madrid, 1932); Julio's wife, the painter Esperanza Parada (San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Madrid, 1928 – Madrid, 2011); Francisco's wife, the painter Isabel Quintanilla (Madrid, 1938), and Amalia Avia (Santa Cruz de la Zarza, Toledo, 1930 – Madrid, 2011), who was married to the artist Lucio Muñoz. Not all these artists were born in Madrid, but for all of them the city was or is their principal place of work and residence.

This exhibition, which is benefiting from the collaboration of the Comunidad de Madrid, is the first on these artists to be held in Madrid in the past twenty-five years and offers a reassessment of the group as a whole. It includes around ninety works including oil paintings, sculptures, reliefs and drawings, which are displayed in the galleries in a way that establishes dialogues between the artists and emphasises the points they have in common, both with regard to their choice of subjects and their manner of approaching them. These connections are reinforced by the close relationship that links these artists, either of family ties or friendship, the coincidences in their academic training and their shared opposition to the Informalism that prevailed in the Spanish art scene in the 1950s.

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**Images from left to right:** Antonio López. *Sink and Mirror*, 1967. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Melvin Blake and Frank Purnell Collection; María Moreno. *Gran Vía II*, 1990. Private Collection; Julio López. *The Mayor*, 1972. Artist Collection.

**More information and images:** Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza – Press Office. Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014 Madrid. Tel. +34 914203944 / 913600236. Fax+34914202780. [prensa@museothyssen.org](mailto:prensa@museothyssen.org); [www.museothyssen.org](http://www.museothyssen.org); <http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2016/realistas/index.html>

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Many of the works selected for the exhibition have not been seen in Spain for many years and have been chosen by the exhibition's two curators – María Lopez, daughter of Antonio López, and Guillermo Solana, together with the technical curator Leticia de Cos – from the artists' own collections, from other private collections and from international institutions, the majority in Spain and Germany, with important loans also coming from the USA. The notable presence of women artists in the group (four women to three men) is also reflected in the exhibition, revealing the prominent role of women in this first artistic generation following the Spanish Civil War.

After their early years of training in the 1950s, which many of these artists undertook at the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes de San Fernando on calle Alcalá in Madrid, their lives and careers have run almost parallel, giving rise to intense intellectual and artistic exchanges. Their consolidation as a group came about through collective exhibitions both in Spain and abroad, from *Magic Realism in Spain* (Frankfurt, 1970) to *Another Reality. Fellow Artists in Madrid* (Casa de las Alhajas, Madrid, 1992). These exhibitions revealed a shared aesthetic: a vision of the everyday, of objects and family spaces, which is imbued with mystery, melancholy and intimacy and marked out by the passing of time and the presence of death. This sense of strangeness produced by things is influenced by certain 20<sup>th</sup>-century figurative trends (such as Metaphysical painting, New Objectivity and Surrealism) and by the great tradition of Spanish painting with its meditative and allegorical resonances.



Isabel Quintanilla. *Glass*, 1969. Galerie Brockstedt, Berlin / Hamburg

### From the domestic to the public



María Moreno. *Naturaleza muerta de la sandía*, 1990. Private Collection

The exhibition has a thematic rather than a chronological structure, leading visitors from the domestic to the public; from the still life to the city; from the close-up, the small-scale and the near at hand to large formats and panoramic urban views. This is a thematic survey of the themes which all these artists depict: still lifes, domestic interiors, streets and courtyards, the human figure and the city of Madrid.

The first section brings together a selection of still lifes by Isabel Quintanilla, María Moreno, Francisco López, Esperanza Parada and Julio López. It continues in the next gallery with images of domestic interiors, including key works by Antonio

López, such as *Sink and Mirror* (1967), *Toilet Bowl and Window* (1968-1971); by Amalia Avia, including *The Dining Room* (1987), and by Isabel Quintanilla, such as *The Telephone* (1996) and *The Sewing Room* (1974).



**Antonio López.** *The Toilet*, 1966. Private Collection

The display continues with the theme of the domestic interior in the form of depictions of long and sometimes dark and disturbing corridors with lateral windows that lead into rooms with windows that allow for glimpses of the outside world. These spaces may seem claustrophobic, involving a subtle interplay between interior and exterior and the idea of burrowing down in the warmth of the home, the private refuge, which gradually opens up towards the outside. Various reliefs and drawings by Francisco López share a gallery with important works by Isabel Quintanilla, such as *The Window* (1970); by María Moreno, including *The Corridor / Doorway at Tomelloso* (1973-1974); and by Antonio López, including *The Toilet* (1966).

The next section follows on naturally, devoted to open spaces, courtyards, gardens and the area around the house, which these artists essentially see as a continuation of it. While the lives of

the artists in this group have been fundamentally urban, their work often evokes rural settings with a certain element of nostalgia. The houses they paint are often village ones, such as those depicted by Antonio López and María Moreno in Tomelloso. However, they also depict their houses in Madrid, located in developments of traditional one-storey dwellings with gardens on the outskirts of the city and with an aesthetic and type of architecture very similar to village houses. *Garden*



**Isabel Quintanilla.** *Garden*, 1966. Colección privada

(1966) and *The Fig Tree* (1995) by Isabel Quintanilla, *Entrance to the House* (1980), and *The West Garden 3* (2003) by María Moreno here establish dialogues with various drawings and sculptures by Antonio and Francisco López in which they portray close family members, generally children, at home in the space where family and friends meet and relax.

In contrast to these more intimate and relatively small-scale figures, the following section of the exhibition focuses on more monumental human forms and on major sculptural projects designed for public spaces. Barely present in the paintings, the human body finds its natural



medium of expression in sculpture. This gallery includes important examples by Julio López, including *The Mayor* (1972), *The Dream* (1976) and *Man from the South* (1972).

**Julio López.** *The Dream*, 1976. Artist Collection



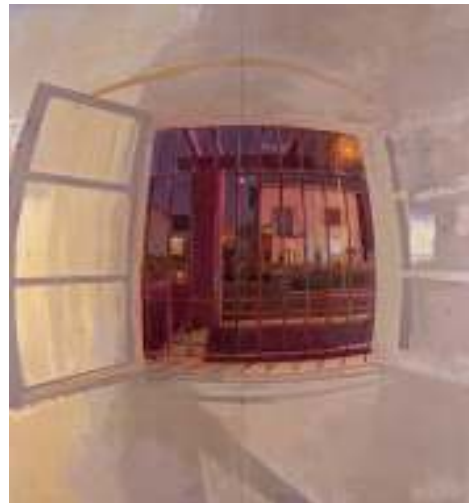
**Amalia Avia.** *Puerta del Sol*, 1979. Colección AENA de arte contemporáneo

The final section, which also includes sculpture, in this case by Francisco López, is devoted to urban views. Here we are now outdoors with works that offer depictions of city streets and hidden corners, particularly in Madrid. Over the years these images have become records of the transformation of the Spanish capital into a modern metropolis. The first room has

depictions of the city that deploy a more close-up focus, such as the paintings *Sewing Machine Shop* (1988) and *The Ministry of Works* (1988) by Amalia Avia, and two large-scale views of Madrid by Antonio López from the 1960s, both of horizontal format.

In the next gallery the horizon opens out with a group of panoramic views of Madrid seen from its outskirts, including works by Isabel Quintanilla, María Moreno and Antonio López painted looking from Vallecas during their shared outdoor painting sessions. Also on display are the series on the Gran Vía by both Antonio López and his wife María Moreno, who painted side by side from the same glassed-in balcony in order to depict the city's skies and rooftops from similar perspectives. Amalia Avia's *Puerta del Sol* (1979) and two views of Rome by Isabel Quintanilla, painted during the time she spent there, complete the selection in this gallery.

In the manner of a conclusion, a final area displays a single work of art: a large-format canvas by Antonio López entitled *Window at Night* (2013-2015). This recently created work, now exhibited for the first time in Spain, is notable for its unusual, wide-angled viewpoint.



**Antonio López.** *Window at Night*, 2013-2015. Antonio López Collection

## **EXHIBITION DETAILS**

**Title:** *Madrid Realists*

**Organiser:** Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

**With the collaboration of the Comunidad de Madrid**

**Venue and dates:** Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, 9 February to 22 May 2016

**Curators:** Guillermo Solana, artistic director of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, and María López

**Technical curator:** Leticia de Cos, Curatorial Department, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

**Number of works:** 87

**Publications:** Catalogue with texts by Guillermo Solana, Francisco Calvo Serraller and Jürgen Schilling; digital publication on the “Thyssen Kiosk” app.

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

### **Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza**

**Address:** Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014 Madrid. Moneo Galleries, Basement level 1.

**Opening times:** Tuesdays to Fridays and Sundays, 10am to 7pm. Saturdays, 10am to 9pm.

**Single ticket: Permanent Collection and temporary exhibitions**

- Standard ticket: 12 Euros
- Reduced price ticket: 8 Euros for visitors aged over 65, pensioners, students with proof of status and Large Families.
- Free entry: children under 12 and officially unemployed Spanish citizens.

**Advance ticket purchase** from the Museum’s ticket desks, its website and on tel: 902 760 511

**More information:** [www.museothyssen.org](http://www.museothyssen.org)

**Audioguide:** available in various languages

## **PRESS INFORMATION:**

<http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2016/realistas/index.html>