

MANOLO VALDÉS



Reina Mariana, 2007 Ed. 5/9 - Bronze, cm 170x130x80
©Manolo Valdés, Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Contini

GALLERIA D'ARTE CONTINI – CALLE LARGA XXII MARZO – VENEZIA

MAY 9th –NOVEMBER 30th, 2017

Opening reception in honor of the artist Saturday May 20th, 2017 at 6.30 pm

Contini Art Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition by the acclaimed Spanish artist Manolo Valdés, on view at Calle Larga XXII Marzo – Venice. Among the most significant artists of the XXI Century, Manolo Valdés is an eclectic, multifaceted artist, whose continuous artistic and formal research conjugates with artistic influences from art history.

The exhibition brings together his latest works, 40-50 pieces exploring the life and the distinctive language of this great artist. The new works, all of which created for the exhibition at Contini Art Gallery, depict beautiful, stylized figures in the artist's well-known signature style. Valdés, famous for depictions of women in all media, has created some of the most communicative works of his

storied career. Charming female heads in aluminum, bronze or alabaster, paintings and large-scale collages as *Perfil II*, which weds a late Matisse collage technique to Renaissance-style drawing. The blue bronze visage in *Mariposas Azules* is adorned with dozens of massive butterflies in a sculpture that is as uplifting as it is profound. The exhibition also includes sculptures from the *Las Meninas* series, which are based on the famous painting by Diego Velázquez. The recurring, “semi-abstracted” *Reina Mariana*, is translated into three dimensions, rendered in bronze, and presented in isolation, containing references to its original context and yet possessing a life of its own.

Velázquez, Rembrandt, Matisse, are his starting point for the creation of a work. Valdés acts as an image-hunter; he chooses a central theme and develops it in series, proposing different meanings and giving back a unique and contemporary image, but not devoid of its original value. He appropriates the most famous masterpieces of the past and then associates them with a contemporary realization: the vivid and vibrant visual language, the study of the matter, the pictorial realism, the use of multidimensional layers and large-scale works, are just some of the features that make his immediately recognizable style.

The subjects dealt with are released from the political-social complaints that have characterized the two decades of the *Equipo Crónica*, a Valencian collective that combined elements of Pop Art with the figurative aesthetic of *Nueva Figuración* movement, highlighting a critical look at Spanish dictator Francisco Franco and art history itself.

After the dissolution of the group in 1981, Valdés reinvented his work and his distinctive artistic style for which he continues to be renowned for today. The visual message that emerges is able to catch the viewer’s attention and thus to elevate Valdés among the greatest living Spanish artists.

Manolo Valdés was born in Valencia, Spain, on March 8, 1942. Apprentice painter since the age of 15, he attends the San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts. During these years, he travels to Paris, discovering the visual and artistic freedom of Pierre Soulages and Robert Rauschenberg. He thus undertakes his career, co-founding in 1964 the Equipo Crónica, collective pioneering Spanish Pop Art where, together with Juan Antonio Toledo and Rafael Solbes, is able to combine creative experimentation and political criticism. After the Equipo Crónica experience, lasted until 1981, he begins his career as a solo artist. He focuses especially on rereading of Artistic and Historical Themes with no provocative references, with the creation of its own creative universe through conceptual and material research. Winner, among others, of the Premio Nacional de Bellas Artes España, his works have been subject to numerous national and international exhibitions. In 2007, the President of France awarded him with the title: “Order of Merit of the French

Republic". He currently lives and works in New York. Since 2016, he collaborates with the Contini Art Gallery in exclusive for Italy.

Works by Manolo Valdés can be found in numerous public and private collections, including: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Fundaciòn of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain; Valencian Institute of Modern Art, Centre Julio Gonzalez, Valencia, Spain; Kunsthalle Kiel Germany; Kunstmuseum, Berlin, Germany; Veranneman Foundation, Kruishoutem, Belgium and many more.

Opening reception in honor of the artist Saturday May 20th, 2017 at 6.30 pm

Open every day from May 9th to November 30th, 2017

Hours 10.30am - 1pm | 2pm - 7.30pm

Exhibition catalogue is available at gallery space

GALLERIA D'ARTE CONTINI

San Marco 2288
Calle Larga XXII Marzo
30124 Venezia
Tel. +39 041 52 30 357

venezia@continiarte.com
www.continiarte.com

In collaboration with:

AUDEMARS PIGUET
Le Brassus