



# MANOLO VALDÉS REINAS Y CABALLERO

Bagno Alpemare, Forte dei Marmi (LU)

Until September 10th, 2023

Embraced by the breathtaking hold of the Apuan Alps, Versilia once again welcomes the summer season with an exhibition titled "Reinas y Caballero" displaying sculptures by Spanish Maestro Manolo Valdés.

Directed by Alberto Bartalini and thanks to the support of the Contini Art Gallery, these sculptures will be on view in Alpemare Beach Club, a property of Andrea Bocelli and his family. This project was possible also thanks to the patronage of the Municipality of Forte dei Marmi.

Manolo Valdés claims his place as one of the most eclectic contemporary artists whose innovative artistic language is able to connect past and present while securing a place in the history of contemporary art through his unique voice.

His sculptures endow some of Velázquez's celebrated paintings with a plastic body; from these masterpieces, Valdés carves out a kind of archetypal form, born out of cuts and imperfections, symbols of the passing of time, which becomes a figural emblem of his own long and free journey through art history.

The artist embarks on a novel artistic expression that transcends materiality, forging the importance that images, in their traditional renditions, assume in our shared culture. We can now experience the creative mind of Manolo Valdés by walking through the luxurious pine forest of Bagno Alpemare where the bronze sculptures rule.

Visitors can discover, among the scents and lush foliage, the exuberance and visionary force of the ten "**Reina Mariana**." The cast bronze versions of the famous portrait of Maria Anna of Austria by Velázquez, are reinterpreted so often by Manolo Valdés that it has become an identifying symbol of his art.

The pure faces and simple lines of these sculptures demonstrate the artist's talent for navigating between figuration and abstraction through a material as solemn as bronze.

The majestic sculpture "**El Caballero**," also made of bronze, represents the emblem of the homage to Velázquez and the unquestionable principle that art's masterpieces are connected by a common thread, in a perpetual ongoing transmission of experience over time. For almost sixty years, Manolo Valdés has been proving how magnificent art can be by being inspired by illustrious models of the past. The artist, with supreme elegance thanks to his profound culture, teaches us how to look beyond the present day, using the past as a bridge to the future.

The masterpieces of the past are thus analyzed and reinvented to fit contemporaneity through realism and a visionary language. Classical echoes capture the viewer's attention, allowing the artist to claim his rightful place among the greatest living Spanish artists.

The monumental sculptures of Manolo Valdés are ignited by a sort of neoteric vitality. Their refined elegance stands out in this en-plein-air setting, which unravels between the blue of the sea and the lush green of nature.

A tribute to an artist who restores the image of the pure and imposing beauty of the artistic heritage through his sculptures, on display until September 10 in this oasis of peace where nature and contemporary art meet.

## Biography

Manolo Valdes was born in Valencia, Spain, in 1942. At the young age of 15, he was already an apprentice as a painter while enrolled at the San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts in Valencia. During his years of studies, during a trip to Paris, he came across the visual and artistic freedom of Pierre Soulages and Robert Rauschenberg. In 1964, he began his artistic career by co-founding the group Equipo Crónica, collaborating with Juan Antonio Toledo and Rafael Solbes: this pioneering Spanish Pop Art group fostered creative experimentation and political criticism. After this experience, which lasted until 1981, he began to have his solo shows. Valdés has been mostly focused on reinterpreting artistic and historical themes without provocative references, creating its own visionary universe through this inspiration, associated with the study of materials. Winner, among many others, of the Premio Nacional de Bellas Artes España, his creations have been featured in numerous national and international exhibitions. In 2007, he was also awarded the title of Officer of the Order of Merit by the President of the French Republic.

The works of Manolo Valdés can be found in numerous public and private collections, such as: the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the George Pompidou Center National Museum of Modern Art (Paris), the Queen Sofía National Museum Center for the Arts (Madrid, Spain), The Guggenheim Foundation (Bilbao, Spain), the Valenciano Institute of Modern Art and the Julio Gonzalez Center (Valencia, Spain), the Kunsthalle (Kiel, Germany), Kunstmuseum (Berlin, Germany), the Veranneman Foundation (Krisuhoutem, Belgium), The National Art Museum of China (Beijing, China), Les Terrasses du Casino (Monte Carlo) and in many other locations.

Since 2016, Valdés has collaborated with Contini Art Gallery, which represents him exclusively in Italy. He currently lives and works between Madrid and New York.

The exhibition is open every day until September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Alpemare Beach Club will be open every day from 8 am to 8 pm, except for Friday and Saturday when it closes at 11 pm.

For Information:

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