

“la Caixa” Collection of Contemporary Art

Selected by Enrique Vila-Matas

17 January 2019 – 28 April 2019

Gallery 7, Free Entry

#laCaixaCollection

17 January 2019 - Internationally acclaimed authors explore Spain’s leading collection of contemporary art in this series of four displays taking place over the course of a year. Each writer curates a display of artworks and contributes new writing based on their selection.

Preeminent Spanish novelist **Enrique Vila-Matas** (b. 1948, Spain) brings an intuitive and personal approach to the “la Caixa” Collection of Contemporary Art for the first display, opening in January 2019. Selecting installation, painting, film and photography by artists **Gerhard Richter** (b. 1932, Germany), **Dominique González-Foerster** (b. 1965, France) and **Dora García** (b. 1956, Spain), he also includes figurative and landscape works by Spanish and European artists of his generation.

The first institutional Spanish collection to focus on postwar contemporary art “la Caixa” was founded in Barcelona in 1985 as the country emerged from a period of dictatorship, to foster dialogue between Spanish and international art. It now includes more than 1,000 works by international artists across the mediums of painting, sculpture, photography, installation and film.

Enrique Vila-Matas is one of Spain’s leading literary figures whose many novels blur the boundaries between fiction and autobiography. Born in Barcelona in 1948 and based in the city today, his selection from the “la Caixa” Collection of Contemporary Art places Spanish and European artists in dialogue. The works become the starting point for a consideration of the author’s literary biography in his accompanying text for the exhibition entitled *Cabinet d’amateur, an oblique novel* (2019), an experimental mix of fiction and essay mirroring his wider work.

Gerhard Richter’s *I.G* (1993), a haunting portrait of a naked female figure who faces a dark interior with her back turned to the viewer is the first work seen on entering the gallery. Nearby a large video installation by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Petite* (2001), shows a young girl seated on the floor in a glass room as ghostly images appear and disappear behind her. In a video by Dora Garcia a child is instructed in breathing techniques by a woman in the manner of a dance or music lesson. **Carlos Pazos’** (b. 1949, Spain) self-portrait *Milonga* (1980) is a staged photograph depicting the artist lost in melancholic reverie in a Barcelona bar. *Thebes, West* (1993) is a composite photograph from a bird’s eye view by **Andreas Gursky** (b. 1955, Germany) of the archaeological site of ancient Thebes in Egypt while **Miquel Barcelo’s** (b. 1957, Spain) large painting *Une poignée de terre* (1989) made soon after the artist’s first trip to Mali in West Africa, depicts a patch of earth at ground level.

Notes to Editors

- The exhibition is curated by Lydia Yee, Chief Curator, Whitechapel Gallery and Nimfa Bisbe, Head of the Contemporary Art Collection “la Caixa”, with Candy Stobbs, Assistant Curator and Ines Costa, Exhibitions Assistant Whitechapel Gallery.

Press Release

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- The first in a series of bilingual publications accompanying each display, an illustrated book will include a specially commissioned new piece of writing by Enrique Vila-Matas and an interview between Lydia Yee and Nimfa Bisbe

About Enrique Vila-Matas

Enrique Vila-Matas (Barcelona, 1948) is one of the most prestigious writers of contemporary Spanish fiction. With an extensive body of work, his novels have been translated into 35 languages, garnering widespread international praise. Notable works include: *Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil* (Anagrama, 1985), *El viajero más lento* (Anagrama, 1992 – Seix Barral, 2011), *Bartleby & Co.* (Anagrama, 2000), *Montano* (Anagrama, 2002), *Never Any End to Paris* (Seix Barral, 2013), *Doctor Pasavento* (Anagrama, 2005), *Dublinesque* (Seix Barral, 2010) and *Fuera de aquí* (Galaxia Gutenberg, 2013), a conversation about his works with his French translator and friend André Gabastou. After the publication of *The Illogic of Kassel* (Seix Barral, 2014) and *Marienbad Électrique* (Bourgois, 2015), a short essay on the nature of art and creation for Dominique Gonzalez Foerster's retrospective in Paris in 2015 and *Because She Never Asked* (2016), his latest published novel is *Mac and His Problem* to be published in English in 2019.

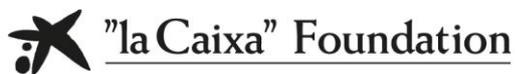
He is the recipient of many prestigious honors and awards, including: Rómulo Gallegos Award 2001, Prix Fernando Aguirre-Libralire 2002, Herralde Novel Award 2002, National Critic Award 2002, Prix Médicis 2003, Ennio Flaiano Award 2006, Fundación Lara award 2006, Spanish Real Academia Award 2006, Elsa Morante Literary Prize 2007, Mondello Award 2009, Prix Carrière 2010, Leteo Award 2010, the Bottari Lattès Grinzane 2011, Gregor von Rezzori Award 2012, Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France 2013, the Formentor Prize 2014, the prestigious FIL Award 2015, the Catalan Culture National Award 2016 and the Feronia Città di Fiano Award 2017. He was named Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor, is a member of the tumultuous Order of Finnegan's and is the (unknown) rector of the Unknown University of New York (McNally Jackson).

About La Caixa -

"la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art was founded in 1985 and now includes more than one thousand works. The origins of the Collection lie in "la Caixa"'s commitment to enabling people to enjoy art and culture. "la Caixa" was founded in 1904 and became "la Caixa" Foundation in 2014 following the reorganisation of the savings bank Caja de Ahorros y Pensiones de Barcelona.

The new Foundation inherited the social mission that "la Caixa" has pursued since its inception to improve the wellbeing of people, particularly those most in need, and work towards the advancement of society as a whole. "la Caixa" began organising exhibitions in the early-1980s, presenting contemporary work and establishing a direct connection with twentieth-century art, before going on to form its own collection. The core of the new Collection was devoted to art from the 1980s, though works by outstanding artists from the 60s and 70s were also included. The questions underpinning the Collection consider: What is the role of art in society? How can we break down the barriers that separate people from art?

From the first, the Collection focused on international contemporary art. Bruce Nauman, Cristina Iglesias, Doris Salcedo, Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, Donald Judd, Mona Hatoum, Dora García, Juan Muñoz, Antoni Tàpies, Cornelia Parker, Juan Uslé, Sigmar Polke, Cindy Sherman and Paul McCarthy are just some of the highly renowned artists represented.



Visitor Information

Admission: Free

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Nearest London Underground Stations: Aldgate East, Liverpool Street, Tower Gateway DLR

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