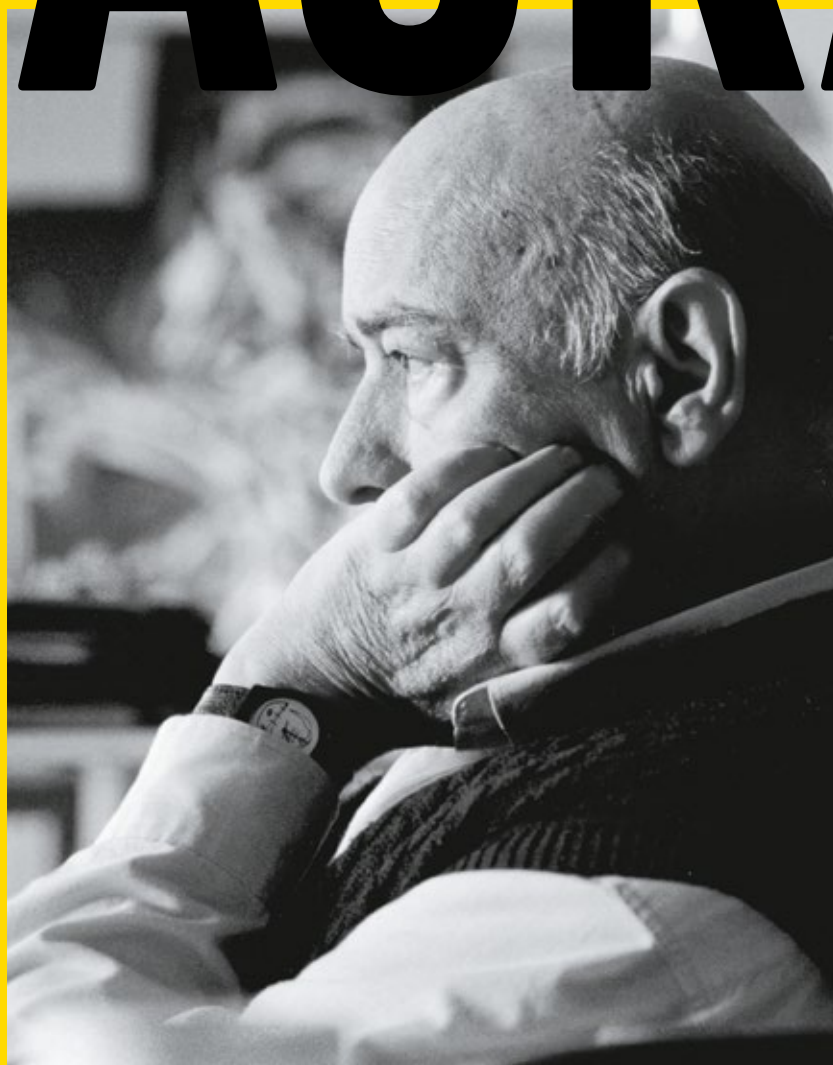


# SAURA



PAINTING  
AT  
WILL

OPERA GALLERY

# SAURA

PAINTING AT WILL

29 FEBRUARY — 26 MARCH 2024

OPERA GALLERY

I have neither sight nor pulse nor pen nor inkpot, I lack everything, only my will abounds”, Goya said not long before he died. Abounding will? I once said that the great painter from Aragón painted with his heart, “with his heart in his hand.” And that with your heart in your hand you cannot paint or only paint badly. Today I must make amends, expanding that first affirmation of mine. With your heart in your hand you can paint well and badly; paint very well or very badly. Like Goya painted. Because with your heart in your hand one paints as one wants. That’s how Goya painted: as he wished. His will abounded: even without sight, without pulse, without pen or inkpot. With the will, with the heart, one paints with blood. Like writing with blood, painting with blood not only means sincerity, real human sincerity; it means that this sincerity is rooted in a profound will, in what we Spaniards call blessed will. For a Spaniard, in the popular sense of the word, doing his blessed will is doing whatever he wants: what he wants most deeply: doing what he desires. And this desire is also called real. When you want to do what you most powerfully desire, in ordinary Spanish you say ‘to follow your real desire’. Is that his caprice? Well, this caprice of the human will can be named with a very exact expression: painting at will. Painting as you want, not what you want. Painting as demanded by real desire: as imposed by blessed will. It is what Goya did: and that’s why he painted so well and so badly. He always painted as he wanted, even when he did not always paint what he wanted; he painted at will, always; even when he did not paint, always, what was his will.

Painting at will. And wanting with blessed will, with real desire, that’s what Goya did. Painting with his heart in his hand, with a will of blood between his fingers, he painted what he most wanted; and what he least wanted, what he did not want; but he painted as he wanted. He painted with blood, with his blood: he painted truly.

José BERGAMÍN, *Painting at Will. Goya, Everything and Nothing of Spain*

## FOREWORD ■

Antonio Saura once remarked that Francisco Goya's *El Perro*—‘*The Dog*’ in English—(ca. 1819-23) was “the world's most beautiful picture.” The ambiguity in this particular Goya painting with its ochre sky and hazy, enigmatic composition, seems to suggest man's futile struggle. *El Perro* was one of the 14 works in Goya's ‘Black Paintings’ series created towards the end of his life that reflected the artist's pathos and outlook on humanity. In some ways the modest palette and composition of this haunting canvas seems to be a stark contrast aesthetically to Saura's rigorous and sometimes severe brushstrokes evocative of angst. However, the oeuvre of Antonio Saura and Goya's *El Perro* are similar in their almost uncanny ability to portray the mercurial nature of the human experience.

“Painting at Will,” Saura's first solo exhibition in London in 58 years, presents a selection of 27 important paintings, works on paper and canvas created between 1959-1997. These artworks explore enduring themes in Saura's practice - from ‘Crucifixions’ to ‘Crowds’ to ‘Imaginary Portraits’ and of course, ‘Goya's Dog,’ which is repeatedly explored through Saura's *Le Chien* de Goya series. This exhibition also notably highlights his Auto-da-fé series, a suite of paintings made using the torn-out covers of books that he originally created 40 years ago.

Emerging from postwar Spain in the late 1950's, Saura was a founding member of the El Paso Group. The collective's identity was shaped by influences from Spanish heritage to the emergence of Surrealism. They embraced Informalism while challenging the conventions of traditional European aesthetics. The pictorial language of The El Paso Group reflected the underpinnings of their 1957 manifesto and not only laid the groundwork for, but also conceptualised the post-war avant-garde movement in Spain.

Spanning almost five decades, his career extended beyond painting into sculpture, writing, printmaking and theatre set design. Saura exhibited widely in Europe and the USA during the grey decades of censorship and dictatorship in his home country of Spain. He had two monographic shows at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York (1961, 1971) and retrospectives in many institutions, such as Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands (1963), Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (1966), Musée Rath, Geneva, IVAM Valencia and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (1989- 1990) and the last grand retrospective to date, at Kunstmuseum Bern (2012) and Museum Wiesbaden (2013). Among many prestigious awards, he received the Guggenheim New York International Prize (1960) and the Grand Prix des Arts de la Ville de Paris (1995), as well as the Carnegie Award for his contribution to documenta Kassel (1964).

With this exhibition, presented in conjunction with Succession Antonio Saura and Fondation Archives Antonio Saura, Opera Gallery London pays homage to one of the most important Spanish artists of the twentieth century, while examining the extraordinary depth, soul, and timeless themes present in Antonio Saura's journey to self actualisation aesthetically realised in this profound body of work. This exhibition celebrates the fearlessness of Antonio Saura—from his external engagement with politics and culture to his internal engagement with the boundless quandaries related to the human condition.

GILLES DYAN  
Founder & Chairman. Opera Gallery Group

GIULIA LECCHINI  
Deputy Director. Opera Gallery London



Antonio Saura and Manolo Valdés, Valencia, 1986 © Paco Alberola

## TRIBUTE TO ANTONIO SAURA ■

Rafael Solbes and I (Equipo Crónica) were in our studio in Valencia one day in 1973 when the phone rang. The person on the other end of the line said “my name is Antonio Saura, have you heard of me?” At that time, Antonio was an artist we worshipped. Juana Mordó had given us books and catalogues of his work. He was one of the group of artists we looked up to and admired: Tàpies, Chillida, Julio González, Miró, Dalí and Picasso. He was ringing to say that he would love to see Equipo Crónica exhibiting in Paris and he proposed paying us a visit in Valencia with the owner of Stadler, the gallery with which he worked. We were both taken aback and excited. A few months later they came to see us and made everything easy for us, and just ten months later we were showing our work in Paris.

On our trip to Paris, Antonio looked after us: he took us to dinner in a Chinese restaurant, he showed us the bookstores and galleries he frequented and we went together to visit ARC. He also took us to a salsa concert in which a Cuban singer called Machito was performing. At the time we knew nothing about salsa but at the concert we met friends of Antonio who talked about salsa and associated it with the Latin-American artists living in Paris. On that trip we got to know and enjoy the company of a cosmopolitan, cultivated and admirable man.

After that we became friends. On our first visit to his studio in Cuenca we were very excited at the prospect of seeing what he was painting. Solbes and I speculated about his long, quick and effective brushwork. We thought that he must surely use brushes with a long handle, that he probably brandished them like a whip, which is why drops of paint splattered. We wanted to see the palette he used, to see whether he had the whole range of tubes of paint from Macarrón, or if instead he had only the basics and mixed them together; we wanted to know what colours he used besides black and white, whether his browns were mixes of green and red, or whether green, red and blue might not even be in his palette. In other words, we were full of curiosity and conjectures.

The first thing we came across on entering his studio was a table covered with drawings, books and some newspapers. They were not preparatory drawings for his canvases, but independent drawings in their own right. There was a paper on which he had adhered wrappings of Bazooka, a very popular bubble gum at the time. He turned this little collage into a character to illustrate some news. We imagined that we were watching Goya creating one of his *caprichos*. He drew with ink on book covers, and told us that he liked to use them as a support.

Antonio was always very generous with us and he convinced the Catalan publisher Gustavo Gili to publish our first book and a portfolio of silkscreen prints by Equipo Crónica. And he continued exercising a great influence over us. Just before we left for Cuba, where we had been invited by the Cuban government, he called us to explain that what we heard and believed about the Cuban revolution was not true. At that moment, we were able to see yet again that Antonio was a free critical spirit with his own criteria.



Antonio Saura, *Portrait imaginaire de Goya 1.84*, 1984



Manolo Valdés, *Perro de Goya*, 1987

It became a habit for us to meet in Cuenca every summer. Tomás Llorens, Rafael Solbes and I used to go for a week or so and we would spend the time talking about painting, and putting the world to rights. After Equipo Crónica broke up I remained friends with Antonio and continued to enjoy his support. We worked together on a campaign canvassing against Spain joining NATO, which we later regretted, first Antonio and then me.

Rosa and I bought our first painting by Antonio at the Antonio Machón gallery. I remember that back then I had started to borrow some of his images to contrast them with images from American Pop. And I believe that ever since quotations from his images were frequent in my work. When Antonio saw my paintings using his images he called me an anthropophagus painter.

After I moved to New York we met less frequently but we would write and call each other. He talked about the exhibitions at the Metropolitan and the MoMA, which he was always up to date on. One day I was accompanying a collector friend of mine who wanted to buy one of Saura's works and Antonio told me to go to the Pierre Matisse gallery, which had some good works by him. The gallerist did not want to show or sell us anything. Years later when the gallery closed I went with Pierre Levai to see that group of works by Antonio and it was incredible to finally be able to see that wonderful set of paintings. Pierre Matisse's jealous possessiveness had kept them hidden away for a long time.

Later on, we acquired one of the works he had done on the theme of Goya's dog, which I love and have even made a version of myself (see pictures p. 12 and 13). I took his painting to my studio and I placed my easel in front of it just like the impressionists had done with the landscape. Today, at home, we have one of his large portrait paintings; it used to hang between a Dubuffet and a Lichtenstein but somehow did not seem very comfortable. Now it has its own wall. It is a painting made at a time when the artist was completely at ease with his craft. It is a wise painting containing all the learning of his experience. It is made with blacks and whites, with silvery greys, with browns and with very similarly sized brushstrokes. I often wonder whether he did the ground or the figure first. One thing I am sure of is that he painted the ground three times: first with dark brown, second with olive green and then he finished with dark grey. It is a painting that sums up a whole life's work. There it is, rebellious, proud, independent, and wonderful.

■ CRITIC'S PIECE

# Calidoscopio Sauresco

The first time I wrote about Antonio Saura was in 1974, fifty years ago next year. It was for the catalogue of an exhibition of his work on paper, some originals and other editions, at the M-11 contemporary art gallery, housed in what is now known as Casa Natal Velázquez, the place where Velázquez was born; and conceived during a visit to Saura's home in Cuenca, together with Quisco de la Peña, the director of this private gallery which, despite its relatively short life, was playing an instrumental role in changing Seville's then moth-eaten art scene. I had met Saura five years earlier, also in Cuenca, where Fernando Zóbel had introduced us. He was 44-years-old at the time, which, from my tender fifteen, made him seem almost ancient. And very intelligent, brilliant, kind, fearless, provocative, and yet at the same time secretive and even modest.

In the text I wrote for that catalogue, knowledgably designed and laid out by Alberto Corazón, who had also been part of the expedition to Cuenca, I discussed Lucas Mallada and his considerations on "the evils of the fatherland", as well as a sentence by Ernesto Giménez Caballero ("all the sublime refinement and all the sublime brutality of the Aragonese") which, despite not communing with the ideology of the founder of La Gaceta Literaria, Saura liked so much that he would reuse it in various of his writings. In my essay I also wondered whether Saura's posture was or was not the only possible solution to the question of Spanishness in art, and I cited other ways of addressing the question, including one by his college Luis Fernández who appraised "the difficult and metaphysical vein of our most ancient painting".

Saura was born in Huesca in 1930; his father was a lawyer and his mother a pianist who was friends with her colleague Pilar Bayona and with Ramón J. Sender. Among the future painter's earliest memories is an artistic one: the sheet-metal birds that the anarchist sculptor Ramón Acín, another of his parents' friends, had erected in the park then known as Miguel Servet, near the family home where the Saura children used to play. Executed at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War by the rebel forces, as was his wife Conchita Monrás shortly afterwards, Acín was always held in high

esteem by his fellow countryman, who penned a very emotive text for the catalogue for the Acín retrospective held in Aragón in 1988. The aforementioned bird sculptures, redolent of origami, the art of folding paper so beloved by Unamuno, turned out to be a childhood fetish for the future painter. He spent the war years travelling with his family, following his father, who, as a government official, was posted to the different places where it was forced to moved: Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona. And a new fetish in the last-named city: Park Güell, one big collage. And the background noise of the bombardments the three cities were subjected to.

Paradoxically, in Madrid during the early years of the post-war period, it was in the Spanish edition of Signal, the Nazi journal, where Saura had his first contact with international modern art. Advocating the persecution of so-called 'degenerate art', in 1942 the copywriters of the propaganda publication borrowed an article published in Fortune by the US critic Thomas Craven, decrying the avant-garde, in which he lamented the arrival to the USA of artists who he also believed to be degenerate. Contrary to what the Nazi mouthpiece intended, the teenager from Huesca thought that the images used to exemplify the evils of degenerate art, from Eugene Berman, Chagall, Dalí, Max Ernst, Masson, Mondrian, Kurt Seligmann and Tanguy, were truly wonderful.

For Christmas 1947, in what turned out to be a truly providential gift, Saura's mother gave him a copy of the Argentinean re-edition by Poseidón of Ismos, the book in which Ramón Gómez de la Serna compiled his personal experiences of the Paris-based avant-garde movements. In this book which he avidly devoured, and which, as he often recalled, opened up the doors for him to contemporary art, the chapter that caught Saura's attention the most was the one on surrealism. In it, the would-be painter and poet immediately identified with a fictional character conjured up in Gómez de la Serna's imagination: "the surrealist son of the Klotz family." Another book by the same author, published by the same editorial, that also left a deep impression on him was his monograph from 1944 on José Gutiérrez Solana, the painter and writer of so-called 'black Spain'. A youthful infatuation that, on the other hand, petered out very soon was the one he felt for Dalí, whose evolution he was unable to accept.

Of course, there were many more books, and with time Saura would become a true bookworm. Personally, I remember him in Athens in 1984, at the opening of an exhibition I was curating which included some of his works. In the bookstores we trawled through one afternoon on that trip, both new and second-hand, with his characteristic voracity he laid his hands on all kinds of publications, with a special emphasis on Greek mythology and Cycladic sculpture.

However, returning to his youth, we should also mention another book that had a profound influence on him: Realismo mágico (1927), by the photographer and art critic Franz Roh, which had originally been published in German two years previously. In Roh's overview of Italian Novecento, of German New Objectivity and their counterparts in other countries, especially France, he gleaned a good handful of names that would abide with him, for instance, the Dutch bauhauser Paul Citroën and his photo-montage Metropolis. I recall one day in the 1980s he asked me to see if I could get my hands on a copy of the book, then out of print. I fulfilled my commission, and he was delighted to be able to once again enjoy Roh's observations, and to relish the poor black-and-white illustrations which, for him, had been like true manna from heaven back in its day.

Saura found refuge in these and other books as a bed-ridden teenager after he was diagnosed with bone tuberculosis in 1943, which confined him to his room for most of the remainder of that decade, and which was also the reason why his parents decided to move to Cuenca, because the climate there was better suited to his illness. Besides his own trove of books, one could also add those he came across in the libraries of friends such as, for instance, Federico Torralba, the art historian from Zaragoza, where he was able to browse through Paul Éluard's Voir (1948) for the first time, as well as issues of Cahiers d'Art and Minotaure.

His first solo show, held precisely thanks to the support of Torralba, at Sala Libros in Zaragoza (the first in a series of bookstores-cum-art galleries that would dot his curriculum: the following would be one at Buchholz in Madrid, where he exhibited in 1951 and in 1952), was made up of experimental works, more specifically his Radiografías mágicas (Magic X-Rays) and Constelaciones (Constellations), where one could detect the influence of Man Ray's rayographs in the case of the former, and of Miró in the latter. The catalogue contained a "letter to visitors to this exhibition" written in lower case, a warm up for what was to come.

Programio (1950), an odd "poetic-pictorial litany", a prose poem that amounts to a manifesto of what he wanted to paint, is a handout of which I have the copy he dedicated to Leopoldo Panero, and whose front and inside cover, also featuring the use of lowercase, once again speaks to us of Saura's liking for minimalist typography, which would continue to be a signature at the time of the El Paso group.

Cementerio de los suicidas (Suicide Cemetery, 1950), now in the possession of IACC Pablo Serrano in Zaragoza, is a good example of his brand of surrealism rife with enigmas which he practiced around the time, indebted to De Chirico, Max Ernst, Masson, the aforementioned Miró and, above all, Tanguy, already leaning towards abstraction and full of chromatic wealth. In addition, we ought to mention, from the same year, El marqués de Sade y una adolescente virgen (The Marquis de Sade and an Adolescent Virgin), a title speaking to his adhesion to surrealism and the classics.

In 1950 Saura had his first contacts with Juan Eduardo Cirlot and others in the circle of Dau al Set, a journal that would feature some of his works, among others in the issue dedicated to Salón del Jazz in 1952, a show in which his work was included. There was a mutual fascination between the two: Cirlot, the maverick heterodox surrealist, and Saura, the young apprentice painter and poet who, in 1951, would print, again in lowercase, calling cards that read "antonio saura, surrealista", and who published a letter in Índice replying to the anti-modern balderdash spouted by the Francoist psychiatrist Juan José López Ibor. Until his death in 1973, Cirlot remained one of the most inspired commentators of Saura's work. By the same token, in 1996 the painter would collaborate in the catalogue for the exhibition Mundo de Juan Eduardo Cirlot, curated by Enrique Granell and Emmanuel Guigon for IVAM in Valencia, with a text in which he compared the author of Diccionario de los ismos, with Gómez de la Serna and Eugenio d'Ors, though in the case of the latter the mention was coupled with a reservation.

Worth underscoring in 1952 is the inclusion of three automatic poems by Saura in the Antología del surrealismo español published by the Alicante-based journal Verbo, an anthology compiled by the editors José Albí and Joan Fuster which I already knew of when writing the text for the M-11 gallery. Apart from the usual run,



El marqués de Sade y una adolescente virgen, 1950

corresponding to no. 23-24.25 of the journal, a number of copies were published with an alternative cover, with the name of the anthologists and the title, which were not in the journal version; both featured a vignette by Saura. In Casa Fuster in Sueca there are two drawings by Saura from this period, one in Indian ink, and the other in colour, somewhat Miróesque. In 1949 Saura had already coincided with another of the poets included in the anthology, Carlos Edmundo de Ory, champion of the Postismo poetry movement, in Homenaje a Mathias Goeritz, a handout published in Barcelona by Cobalto, and they would coincide once again in the pages of Deucalión, the journal based in Ciudad Real run by Ángel Crespo.

In 1953, Tomás Seral, the poet from Zaragoza who incidentally was the founder of Sala Libros, invited Saura to exhibit at Clan, his bookstore-gallery in Madrid in calle Espoz y Mina, designed by Alfonso Buñuel, in a surrealist exhibition called Arte fantástico, to which Seral himself contributed the hand from Buñuel's Un Chien Andalou and also featured work by, among others, José Caballero, the Cuban artist Servando Cabrera, Calder, Modest Cuixart, Ángel Ferrant, the Swiss artist Jean Lecoultre, the Italian artist Iván Mosca, Miró (with Perro ladrando a la luna, the pochoir published by ADLAN in 1934), Oteiza, Picasso, Joan Ponç, Antonio Quirós, the US artist Tony Stubbing, Tàpies, and Tharrats, as well as Saura himself and his brother Carlos. The most striking aspect of this group was the Madrid-Barcelona connection, exemplified by the presence of several writers from Dau al Set. Apart from Amantes (Lovers), a photo of a beach with an atmosphere between metaphysical and Tanguyesque, Carlos Saura participated in the catalogue with surrealist portraits of most of the other participants, and with photos of his brother's studio, with the walls painted black in imitation of the decoration of the Art of this Century gallery conceived by Kiesler, montages of broken dolls (Objetos macabros para placer de niños morbosos [Macabre Objects for the Pleasure of Morbid Children]), and two hovering ghosts clearly inspired by Hans Arp. One should also remember that later on Saura would visit Arp at his house in Meudon, and that Arp would give Saura the present of a book composed entirely in lowercase. That same year, as well as exhibiting drawings in the same gallery, he took part in Eugenio d'Ors' Salón de los Once and at the Congress of Abstract Art in Santander. In 1953 he would also travel for the first time to Paris, where he would return again in December, this time to settle there, with the city soon becoming the other pole in his life.

Once installed in Paris, Saura entered the surrealist group in 1954 (introduced by the Chilean surrealist painter Haroldo Donoso, who he had met in Madrid, when the latter was exhibiting at Cultura Hispánica), and attended its meetings at Café Cyrano; was included in the pages of Médium and in the group show at À l'Étoile scellée, made friends with Breton (who dedicated a copy of Le Surréalisme et la peinture to him in 1953, calling him "the painter of omens" who "knows how to read the sediment of the air"); with Péret, who would travel to Madrid in 1954 on a political mission, and with whom he would visit the El Escorial monastery, the Frenchman horrified and the Spaniard gripped by a more ambivalent feeling; and with Eugenio Fernández Granell, who, in a parenthesis in his exile on the other side of the Atlantic, was residing for a time in Paris, and would always treasure a couple of surrealist drawings by Saura.

The only survey of Saura's surrealist production to date, discovering for us a part of his output barely glossed until then, was the exhibition El jardín de las cinco lunas (Garden of the Five Moons, 1994), borrowing its title from one of his works from

1950, and curated by Emmanuel Guigon, a knowledgeable expert in the theme, for the Museo de Teruel. Two years previously, Guigon and I had worked on an exhibition for the same museum based on a line borrowed from Juan Eduardo Cirlot: Ciudad de ceniza: El surrealismo en la posguerra (City of Ashes: Post-war Surrealism), in which of course Saura had been included.

Presently the painter began to find the atmosphere of the surrealist group moribund, and to the great outrage of Breton, and above all of Péret, he ended up leaving the group (with the outcome that a solo show scheduled for À l'Étoile scellée was cancelled). One of the reasons behind his departure was his sense of solidarity with his good friend the Hungarian artist Simon Hantaï, with whom he shared a certain gestuality and the idea of grattage, who had been thrown out of the group. Saura would soon become friends with Lam, Matta, Asger Jorn and Edouard Jaguer, who involved him in Phases. He now began to look to informalist artists, both the French variant championed by Michel Tapié, among whom he particularly liked Dubuffet, Fautrier, Hartung, Soulages, Wols and Michaux, with a more reserved opinion of Georges Mathieu and his "grandiloquent ejaculations", and especially the US abstract expressionists: Pollock (particularly his all-over painting, on which he would write an excellent review in the newsletter of the El Paso group in March 1958), Rothko (who he called the painter of silence), De Kooning (he was especially fond of his Women), Sam Francis (and his chromatic lushness), Guston, Motherwell, Kline, the prickly Clyfford Still, Tobey... Without overlooking the Japanese movement Gutai, introduced into France by Michel Tapié. Or Italians like Alberto Burri and Emilio Vedova. Or Jean-Paul Riopelle from Canada. Or Alechinsky, Karel Appel, Jorn and other CoBrA artists. Few Spaniards were able to assimilate so creatively these teachings, especially those coming from US critics and writers like Dore Ashton, Frank O'Hara and Robert Rosenblum.

Saura's shift to informalism, complete with all his weaponry and baggage, was made readily visible in 1956 in his exhibition at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Madrid, then located in the basement of the National Library, for which he designed a catalogue with a brown paper cover, with his surname handwritten in black. In the works on view, there were European references, for example to Uccello and Pisanello, but more telling was the focus on Spain, Venus de Cuenca, Serie Castellana, and so on, a poetics of transition with certain landscape insinuations that were soon expunged, and some references to Flamenco which he had used as the title of a work in 1954, the subject of a pioneering documentary by his brother Carlos, filmed in Cuenca.

In 1957 he had his first solo show in Paris, at the gallery run by Rodolphe Stadler, who became Saura's and Tàpies' dealer in France. Michel Tapié, poet, former member of the Les Réverbères group, art critic, and then artistic director of the gallery, wrote a foreword for the catalogue. Located in rue de Seine, and founded in 1955, it was, while it lasted, a magical space whose blackness, broken only by the odd flash of brightness (for instance, the sculpture by the US artist Claire Falkenstein that would become its anagram), suited Saura's painting very well.

In Madrid, he painted Saeta, one of his first masterpieces, sweeping, essential, dazzling. This was also when he began the extensive, spectacular series of Crucifixions, whose point of departure is Velázquez's Christ (and, for its poetic appropriation, Unamuno), another of his benchmark works at the Prado museum, from which he would also source another of his versions of Velázquez, his portrait



El grito nº7, 1959

of the nun Jerónima de la Fuente. Concerning his Crucifixions, Saura himself also mentioned another medieval Christ, as well as Robert Capa's photograph of the death of the militiaman, which he versioned in a work on paper in 1963. Following in the footsteps of the old master par excellence, Saura somehow also imitated Picasso who around the same time had also been dialoguing one to one, from modernism, with the Meninas.

On the other hand, Saura finally achieved his dream of forming an experimental group, somehow mirroring European models like CoBrA, the Situationists (much later, in 1967, he collaborated in The Situationist Times, the periodical edited by Jacqueline de Jong and Noël Arnaud), which he was conversant with thanks to his friendship with Alechinsky and especially Jorn. As far back as 1953, we know that he had been mulling over the idea of a group, and had spoken about it to José Ayllón, Fermín Aguayo and Carlos Edmundo de Ory. The initial members of El Paso, which would be the name finally adopted by the group, included Canogar, Feito (living in Paris), Juana Francés, Millares, Rivera, Pablo Serrano, Antonio Suárez, and Saura. Their shared poetics was informalism and their common goal was to enact a programme that would lend them greater international visibility. Several of its members left the group shortly afterwards. And then Chirino and Manuel Viola joined. There were also critics in the group's circle like Ayllón (always the most aligned), Manuel Conde and Juan Ramírez de Lucas, soon joined by Vicente Aguilera Cerni (for whom the El Paso group were children of 1936, and grandchildren of 1898) and José María Moreno Galván (whose wife, Carola Torres, made some beautiful tapestries with Saura and others from his generation during the following decade); and also architects like Antonio Fernández Alba and José Antonio Fernández del Amo, who was also director of the Museo de Arte Moderno; and the avant-garde composer José Luis de Delás. They also enjoyed the support of older generations, like Miró, his friend the hatmaker Joan Prats, the poet Joan Brossa, the sculptor Ángel Ferrant, or the avant-garde flamenco dancer Vicente Escudero. And while it lasted, it also enjoyed the support for biennials (Venice, but also Sao Paulo and Alexandria) and in general for Spanish group shows abroad from Luis González Robles.

That same year of 1957, Michel Tapié was the driving force behind Otro arte, an extraordinary group show organized by Club 49, which opened at Sala Gaspar in Barcelona (Picasso's, Miró's and Tàpies' gallery), before touring, thanks to Fernández del Amo, to Sala Negra at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Madrid. The show revolved around artists on Galerie Stadler's roster, including Appel, Bryen, Burri, Claire Falkenstein, Ruth Franken, Paul Jenkins, Mathieu, Riopelle, Saura, Serpan and Tàpies. With the addition of De Kooning, Fautrier, Pollock, Tobey, Tharrats, Vila-Casas and Wols, among others. The iteration that opened in Madrid also included work by another three painters from El Paso: Canogar, Feito, and Millares.

In 1958, Sala Negra was again the venue for another influential group show, a touring exhibition from the MoMA in New York of new US painting. Curated by Alfred H. Barr, the director of MoMA, the mounting in Madrid was overseen by the aforementioned curator and great poet Frank O'Hara. De Kooning, Pollock and Tobey were the only three artists to feature in both shows. All the great action painters were represented, although for obvious reasons Motherwell's Elegy to the Second Republic was left in storage. And this is when the idea of an equivalent Spanish exhibition at the MoMA in New York occurred to O'Hara.

When Manuel Viola, an artist from Zaragoza, joined El Paso, he reinforced the group's Aragón contingent (following the desertion of Pablo Serrano), as well as its post-surrealist faction. Its members had been impressed by the evolution of the painting of the former writer for the Lerida-based journal *Art* and then later *La Main à Plume*. In a group show held in 1958 at Club Urbis, Saura was particularly taken with a painting by Viola, *La Saeta* (note the coincidence with the title of the aforementioned painting by Saura). In 1998, for the catalogue of the posthumous retrospective of his colleague and friend at MEAC, Saura would write a text on Viola's early work *Oniro*. Among other things, he was fascinated by his fellow countryman's knowledge of the world of flamenco dancing and singing.

Another masterpiece, the rough primitivist *Retrato imaginario de Brigitte Bardot* (Imaginary Portrait of Brigitte Bardot), would see the light of day in 1958, fruit of an obsessive fascination with one of the great erotic myths of the time, and one of the first major acquisitions made by Zóbel, who, before placing it in one of the most spectacular rooms of the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art in Cuenca, which we shall return to later, had it in his apartment in calle de Velázquez, Madrid. The other even more totemic—more *demoiselle d'Avignon*?— version of Brigitte Bardot, from 1962, is in the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires. In addition, there is also a black and white photo of the actress sacrilegiously smudged with Indian ink. Another wonderful painting, in this same year of wonders, in which Saura outdid himself in each new undertaking, is *El grito nº 7* (Shout no. 7), now in Museo Nacional Reina Sofía, a tense, passionate and gesticulating painting whose title of course remits to Edvard Munch, but also to Antonioni's film from 1957, *Il grido* (The Cry).

Saura's first Shrouds date from 1959, also the year when he decided to begin his variations of Goya's dog, perhaps the most essential and modern of the so-called Black Paintings at Goya's home Quinta del Sordo, which fascinated Saura in his adolescence on his first trip to the Prado with his father, where Velázquez's Christ also caused a deep impression on him. For Goya's most unconditional admirer, the dog was "the most beautiful painting in the world". A picture in which one can see a self-portrait of someone who declared that "the sleep of reason produces monsters," and a picture at the very origin of Saura's *Retratos imaginarios de Goya* (Imaginary Portraits of Goya). A picture that ended up somehow as a self-portrait of Saura himself. A picture whose composition and colouring strikes us today as Rothkian, and the truth is that I have always fantasized about the prospect of an exhibition confronting Goya's dog with some Rothkos. Many years after beginning his suite on Goya, between 1972 and 1975 Saura worked on an illustrated novel called *La Quinta del Sordo*, to which he added a whole host of characters from Spanish art, literature and flamenco, and even his beloved Lautréamont. In 1989, *La Quinta del Sordo*, as such, in Spanish, was the chosen title for his solo show at Wiener Secession, Vienna. And in 1996, he curated a wonderful exhibition for various venues in Zaragoza called *Después de Goya, una mirada subjetiva*, accompanied by a hefty catalogue with a detail on the cover of a work by the mysterious Alfred Kubin, one of the many artists, ranging from Victor Hugo to Víctor Mira, an artist from Aragón, included in the show, among which we could also underscore Henri Michaux, an artist Saura was particularly fond of. Michaux the painter, but also Michaux the poet, and especially this line: "Everything I see, awake at night, could be inside me". The exhibition proved to be the most brilliant example of the painter's associative intelligence.

In 1959 *Papeles de Son Armadans*, the influential journal run by Cela, dedicated a monographic issue to El Paso, with a cover by Saura. It also included "Espacio y gesto", an incisive theoretical text by Saura, in which, as a lover of good painting under whatever denomination it may be classified, besides talking about the informalists, he also spoke about the lushness of Bonnard and about Monet's *Nymphéas*. Inspired by this experience with the future Nobel laureate, he produced a portfolio of 16 Quixote-inspired lithographs which the writer called *Pintiquiniestras*, printed at Boj in Madrid by the Greek printmaker Dimitri Papageorgiu, who did so much for graphic work in Spain. Saura would repeat the experience with Papageorgiu in *Los curas de abril* (1960), another portfolio of six lithographs with a text by Antonio Pérez.

In terms of exhibitions, 1960 would be absolutely decisive. This is the year of El Paso's final show at the L'Attico gallery in Rome (for which Dimitri Papageorgiu, yet again, printed a portfolio of lithographs by the group which for all intents and purposes had already broken up). But, above all, worth underscoring were two group shows of Spanish art in New York, one curated by James Johnson Sweeney at the Guggenheim, and the other by Frank O'Hara at MoMA, in which Saura was represented by a Crucifixion, a Goya's Dog, and a Three Graces after Rubens, now in the Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao. Touring to various museums, these shows were the result of agreements between the Spanish and US governments. Around this time, Saura started working professionally with Pierre Matisse. US critics and collectors were deeply impressed by the work of the El Paso group and other Spanish abstractionists, which had already caused a sensation at the Venice Biennale in 1958. Special mention was made of Saura's consummate control of formats, his incandescent forms and painterly material, which, seen from today's perspective, continue to exert a special facility to coalesce his critical *españolismo*, his revision of Spanish history and Spanish art, with the great leap forward of US painting, both in its actionist and contemplative and sublime strands.

Very soon afterwards, Matisse's son would become Saura's dealer in New York, complementing in the New World the work in the Old world of Stadler (and others in Germany, like Otto van de Loo, the Netherlands, Sweden, and of course in Spain). His first solo show at Matisse's gallery was held in 1961. On his first trip to Manhattan, with the purpose of attending the opening, his photo was taken by the Cuban painter and photographer Jesse Fernández: on the street, in De Kooning's studio, or with Tàpies at the Guggenheim or in crowded record stores. The painter of *Women* was not the only US artist Saura frequented back then, as he also met Guston, Kline, Lee Krasner, Motherwell, Alfonso Ossorio, and Rothko. Later, he would become friends with Walasse Ting, the Chinese-American erotomaniac from Manhattan, who included Saura among the 62 lithographs by abstract expressionist and pop artists in the wonderful illustrated book *1¢ Life* published in 1964. As was the case with so many other artists, I first heard about Walasse Ting thanks to Saura.

From this moment onward, the New World was a permanent focus of attraction for Saura, and not just the USA, but also Latin America: Buenos Aires and Rio, in whose museums he exhibited, though without personally travelling there himself, in 1963, and later in Mexico, where he exhibited and made many friends, and in Caracas, but above all in Cuba, a country in whose Revolution he believed, making friends with Cuban artists and writers (Wifredo Lam, Amelia Peláez, Portocarrero, Carpentier, Lezama, Severo Sarduy, Cabrera Moreno, Jesse Fernández ...), and where he met Mercedes Beldarrain, his second wife. Speaking of Latin America, unfortunately



Dora Maar 25.5.83, 1983

he never got to fulfil his project for an illustrated edition of Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana*. Likewise, we should also recall his concept of destructive universalism, counterpointing the term coined by Torres-García. And while he created some covers for books by Carlos Fuentes or Gabriel García Márquez, it is strange that, on the other hand, though he was friends with Cortázar, they never worked together on any project despite their many shared affinities.

Returning our focus to Spain, 1960 is the year of the photograph taken by Carlos Saura, of the two brothers outside Antonio's house in Cuenca along with Buñuel, against the backdrop of the gorge of the river Júcar, on whose rocky slopes were painted *Ojos de la Mora* (eyes of the moor), which would crop up again later in one of his works on paper. These were followed by other snapshots in Toledo, during the filming of *Viridiana*.

Saura was obsessed with Velázquez's *Christ* and with Goya's dog. He created *Multitudes* (Crowds) that took over the whole surface of the canvas or paper which could almost be seen in the wake of Munch's strollers from 1892 (the point of departure, in the final period of Saura's life, for the three very 'crowded' monumental works in his cycle on Karl-Johann Strasse, the second of which is in the possession of Guggenheim Bilbao) or those of Ensor or Giacometti. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to the colourful euphoria of *Narraciones* (Narrations, rooted in his love for comics) or of *Cocktail Parties*, a euphoria foreshadowed by his *Damas en technicolor* (Technicolour Ladies). Saura painted variations on Rembrandt's self-portraits in a suite with the Joycean title of *Remembrandt* (1973), viewed almost like rotting cheeses. He also made a version of the portrait of Philip II in the Prado, once thought to be by Juan Pantoja de la Cruz but now attributed to Sofonisba Anguissola, many portraits of Spanish gentlemen wearing ruffs. And imaginary portraits of Frans Hals. And, finally, one would also have to mention, always mindful that we are talking about 'painting about painting', the suite based on Picasso's portraits of Dora Maar and the compositional layout of *Woman in a Blue Hat* (1939) at Musée Picasso in Paris.

Saura illustrated various works of twentieth-century Spanish literature, for instance, in 1982, *El arte de birlibirloque*, by José Bergamín, with whom he shared a passion for bullfighting (see *Sauromaquia*, the suite from 1957-1959 in whose list he would mix Manuel Granero, *Bataille*, and Domingo Dominguín, and also see, in 1990, his *Tauromaquia* with the photographer Jean Bescós), or titles by Fernando Arrabal, Miguel Hernández (*Como el toro*, 1961, for *Estampa Popular* de Madrid) or José-Miguel Ullán, on whose 'books with painters' he wrote. He made illustrations for the reborn *Revista de Occidente*, and for the banned *Ruedo Ibérico*, which was published in Paris. In 1964 he made historic stage sets for García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, directed by the filmmaker Juan Antonio Bardem. Regarding the wellspring of Spanish tradition, his most exceptional creation, a high-point in contemporary graphics, was *Trois visions* by Quevedo, a limited edition published by Yves Rivière in 1971 including 42 lithographs. Saura had already illustrated another work by the great Spanish baroque poet, this time in a German edition in 1963, *Träume*, with six etchings, published by DuMont Schauberg. Also worth mentioning, around this time of 1964, is a portfolio of 16 lithographs in colour, a particularly striking suite printed by Dimitri Papageorgiu, and focused on the history of Spain, always contemplated with a mixture of love and hate. Almost like a set of fairground knock-down dolls, the set featured various kings and queens, Cardinal Cisneros, Torquemada (there would be another suite of works in 1984 called *Auto de fe*), Hernán Cortés, St John

of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila, Quevedo, Goya, the Duchess of Alba, Joseph ‘Pepe Botella’ Bonaparte, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, and, to top it all, Franco... The list was chosen by Jorge Semprún, who nonetheless never delivered the texts that were meant to go with the lithographs. In an interview Quico Rivas and I did with Saura for *El Correo de Andalucía* in 1971, speaking about Spain he said, “I try to free myself from something almost impossible: the weight of history and its outdated images”. (Also worth noting, in 1981, the year of the failed coup led by Tejero, is a work on paper inspired by that infamous coronel).

Among the many excellent books published by Archives Antonio Saura, to my way of thinking there is none as important as *Erótica* (2008), which compiles Saura’s most outstanding work on this theme and, following an incisive foreword by Jacques Henric, a writer in the circle of *Tel Quel*, various texts by the artist himself, some of high sexual intensity, on a par with the images with which they are paired. Both in the texts as well as in his paintings, drawings and collages, we were witnessing the unfolding of a very cruel *Bataille*-like gaze in his quest for the convulsive beauty Breton spoke of, an obscene, animal and monstrous beauty, a sexualized beauty, among whose precedents obviously we could cite Velázquez’s *The Rokeby Venus*, and Goya’s *Naked Maja*. And so, his aforementioned assaults on Brigitte Bardot were followed by an extensive series of *Ladies* (women’s bodies was the most recurrent figurative motif in his oeuvre, his main anchor, along with *Faces*, which he needed when it came to painting, in order “not to lose himself”), his pared-down nudes, his *Cámara ardiente* in collaboration with the poet from the *CoBrA* circle Jean-Clarence Lambert, his copulations, his *Convento de Saturno*, his fornicating priests, his women in an armchair (among them, in 1967, Geraldine Chaplin, at the time the partner of his brother Carlos: another of the masterpieces at the museum in Cuenca) and his sofa-women, his *Furious Strip-tease*, his book of whores, his nudes in the room, his odours of sanctity based on vintage porn, his *stupra*, his superimpositions including his *Temptations of St Anthony*, his ladies from *El Molino* (the famous cabaret in Barcelona), and finally *Novisaurias*, as they were renamed by Cirlot.

It is in this area of his output where one can perhaps best appreciate Saura’s working method, his repetitive engagement with certain motifs, and his interest in collage, photomontage, layering... Several photographs document his propensity, as an absolute fanatic of iconography and archives, to surround himself with what he called “the wall of life”, a vast source, with an ever-growing and inordinate accumulation of images which he would use to kickstart a given project, whether they be photos of naked women in arousing poses (taken from what were then known as ‘men’s magazines’), whether they be reproductions of works by old masters like Cranach, El Greco, Velázquez, Rembrandt, Goya, Ingres, Delacroix, Manet, Munch, Matisse, Picasso, Egon Schiele, Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, Hans Bellmer, Pierre Molinier, Lucien Freud, the *Dubuffet of Corps de Dames*, *De Kooning and Bacon*. This practice, well documented in the book *Erótica*, whose margins reproduce many images culled from the legendary files that contained what he called his iconography, remind us of the snapshots by Maurice Jarnoux in 1953, in which one can see André Malraux working on the floor of his home in Boulogne, completely covered by dozens of photos for his *Musée imaginaire*. In the case of Saura, we have the precedent of the estamparios or collaged folding screens that proliferated in Gómez de la Serna’s successive torreones both in Madrid and in Buenos Aires. Like his friend Cortázar, Saura was enthralled by postcards, and he was also haunted by the memory of one album, ultimately lost, for which he always felt an enormous sense of nostalgia, in

which his father, in Barcelona during the Civil War, collected press clippings. “The album of life” his son called it, who remembered that it contained photos of the war and others of animals, reproductions of artworks, children’s comic strips... Related with all this, his project from 1994, *Nulla dies sine linea*, based on clippings from daily newspapers and finally published posthumously in 1999.

A landmark moment for Saura and indeed for the rest of the major artists of his generation was when Juana Mordó opened her own gallery in 1964, together with partners including Ayllón who renounced that role soon afterwards. Another ground-breaking event happened two years later when Zóbel opened his extraordinary Museum of Spanish Abstract Art in the so-called hanging houses in Cuenca. If Saura’s imaginary portrait of Brigitte Bardot from the museum in Buenos Aires had appeared in *La boutique*, Luis García Berlanga’s film from 1959, the one from the museum in Cuenca followed suit in 1966, in Carlos Saura’s film *Peppermint Frappé*. We should also recall that Antonio would collaborate in some of his brother’s later films, and, with set designs and poster for his production of *Carmen*, Bizet’s *españolada*, at *Staatsoper Stuttgart* in 1991 with musical direction by Luis García Navarro. Also worth noting is a number of collaborative works, Carlos’s photos of Antonio which the latter then intervened, in the series *Moi* (1976). Cuenca was also the place where Saura interacted with younger people, from members of the New Generation promoted by Juan Antonio Aguirre (the painter and critic who was highly critical of Saura’s concerns with black Spain), to Broto (included, along with others from his group, in the controversial Spanish exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 1976, in which Saura played an instrumental role together with Valeriano Bozal, Tomás Llorens and other intellectuals associated, like him, with the Spanish Communist Party, to which Moreno Galván also belonged, although the latter was much more critical of the project, as was Aguilera Cerni), as well as Campano, Paloma Chamorro, Rafael Pérez-Mínguez, Quico Rivas or myself.

Following Spain’s transition to democracy, it was absolutely incumbent upon my generation to see the lavish deployment of Saura’s work in the retrospective at Sala de las Alhajas in Madrid in 1980. In his homeland of Aragón, there was a profusion of exhibitions, and in 1987 he created the colourful apotheosis of *Elegía*, the dome for the *Diputación de Huesca*, the city where six years previously I had taken part in a tribute that he and his brother had paid to the *Museo de Arte Contemporáneo del Alto Aragón*, on a trip when I accompanied Saura on a visit to his colleague José Beulas.

Saura was always fascinated by beautifully edited books. He himself always paid very careful attention to his own publications. And how beautiful they are, starting with *Programio* and others already mentioned from his early stages and then, from the beginning of his poster work, now compiled in a catalogue raisonné by Olivier Weber-Caflisch and Jean-Charles Giroud, those two two-colour posters from Madrid by El Paso, with their striking minimalist typographical essentialism. Given this background, it is easy to understand his rapport with Hans Meinke, the driving force behind *Círculo de Lectores* and *Galaxia Gutenberg*, to whom we owe such typographically and graphically impeccable books, both for bibliophiles and ‘ordinary’ readers alike. Thanks to this Barcelona-based German publisher, he had the enormous satisfaction of illustrating works he held close to his heart, in editions unprecedented up to then in Spain: the poetry of St John of the Cross; *Quixote* by Cervantes; *Criticón* by Baltasar Gracián, the writer from Huesca and the third pillar, together with Goya and Buñuel, of his foundations in Aragón; *Aforismos*, by

Lichtenberg, which the surrealists returned to again and again; Pinocho, by Carlo Collodi; Kafka's Diaries; George Orwell's 1984; and La familia de Pascual Duarte, by his old friend Cela... (I shall leave for later a final reference to this publishing house, and to Gómez de la Serna, with which I shall close this kaleidoscope).

Galaxia Gutenberg was also the publishers behind the four posthumous volumes compiling Saura's writings. Together with previously unpublished texts, there were many others which had been published in their day in the El País newspaper, in various journals, in compilations and anthologies, in exhibition catalogues. Often furious responses to certain decisions taken by the Prado museum (especially those affecting the rooms with his beloved black paintings), or against the ARCO art fair. Writings (sometimes obituaries) about fellow artists like Picasso (underscoring, in 1982, his satirical diatribe Contra el Guernica, sparked by his annoyance at the way the painting was been utilized by politicians), Saul Steinberg, De Kooning, Soulages, Bram van Velde, Asger Jorn, Alechinsky, Lucebert, Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Kazuo Shiraga (by whom he had a powerful painting hanging at the entrance to his home in Cuenca) and other members of Gutai, Walasse Ting, the actionist Arnulf Rainer (in Vienna in 1989, at the aforementioned Spanish show at Secession, I saw the understanding between the two), Tàpies (with whom he shared a love for Brassai's photos of graffiti, among other things), Zóbel, Sempere, Albert Ràfols Casamada, Vicente Rojo, Antonio Pérez and his found objects, the explosive Alberto Greco, Bonifacio, Baselitz, Miquel Navarro and his cities, and a few others... Also on writers with leanings toward painting, like Max Aub and Alberti. And he also wrote long and well on non-European art, and on art and bullfighting, and on the baroque, and on the tradition of Spanish painting. A kaleidoscope of the subjects that fascinated him, among which, in the exhaustive review prior to sitting down to write this text, I stumbled upon a reference which I had forgotten to the stunning and, for me, familiar gothic Christ of the cathedral of Perpignan.

I was always struck by Saura's inordinate interest in fellow artists who, while practicing poetics very different from his, intrigued the great amateur he was. Generally speaking, they were repetitive, obsessive painters who kept on returning to the same theme: not so far removed from his own approach to what he called the "battle of the painting". This term brings to mind the boxing ring, or the studio where Pollock did his drippings on the floor, or the rooms where he placed his Ladies, especially those doing a Furious Strip-tease. The battle is indeed also one of the bedroom, of love. But Saura was also sensitive to others not necessarily so convulsive, nor so extreme, nor so automatist. In his writings he often returned to Monet's Nymphéas (precursors of so much in North America, as Clement Greenberg was well able to discern) and to Cézanne's Sainte-Victoire. Incidentally, as I have said on many previous occasions, it was in his home in Cuenca where I had a chance for the first time to contemplate two tableautins by Gonzalo Chillida, the painter from San Sebastian who scrutinized the Cantabrian Sea every day from his window overlooking the Concha beach in order to paint it, and about whose work, partly overshadowed by the universal fame of his brother Eduardo, Saura wrote incisively in a text dated in 1994, in which he noted the affinities with Morandi. In 1992, we were both involved in the catalogue for the retrospective of the Venezuelan artist Armando Reverón at Palacio de Velázquez, in which his text, "El deslumbramiento", eloquently expressed the reasons behind his liking for the work of the solitary artist from Macuto, who he had first discovered thanks to a screening at the Cinémathèque in Paris of Margot Benacerraf's documentary film on Reverón from 1952, and then

personally in Caracas and Havana. The last text by Saura published in his lifetime was in 1998, in the catalogue for the Klee retrospective at the IVAM and Thyssen museums, curated by Emmanuel Guigon. His essay on Klee's late works was uncannily titled "Klee, punto final", full stop. The following year when Tomás Llorens and I were preparing a Morandi retrospective for the same two museums, we had planned to ask Saura to write a text for the occasion, but his death, his own full stop, foreclosed the possibility, and his place in the catalogue was taken by Ràfols.

I shall conclude by returning to Gómez de la Serna. In 1987, Saura made a drawing for the cover of a reprint of his Libro nuevo edited for Fondo de Cultura Económica by our common friend Ioana Zlotescu, who would later publish Gómez de la Serna's complete works in Círculo de Lectores, a publishing house the painter had introduced her to. In 1989 Círculo de Lectores commissioned me to write the epilogue for Gómez de la Serna's Flor nueva de greguerías, which was ordered by and had a prologue (an "imaginary letter to Ramón Gómez de la Serna") and illustrations by Saura. At the time, with a view to Gómez de la Serna's centenary, which was to be held in 1988, he had committed himself to an exhibition on Ismos at Museo Nacional Reina Sofía. The show was eventually postponed and the project was bogged down. After bearing it in mind for IVAM in Valencia, the exhibition, curated by Carlos Pérez and I, was finally held in 2002 at the museum for which it was initially conceived. And, of course, we dedicated it to Saura.

JUAN MANUEL BONET



Autodafé, 1989

## Auto-da-fé

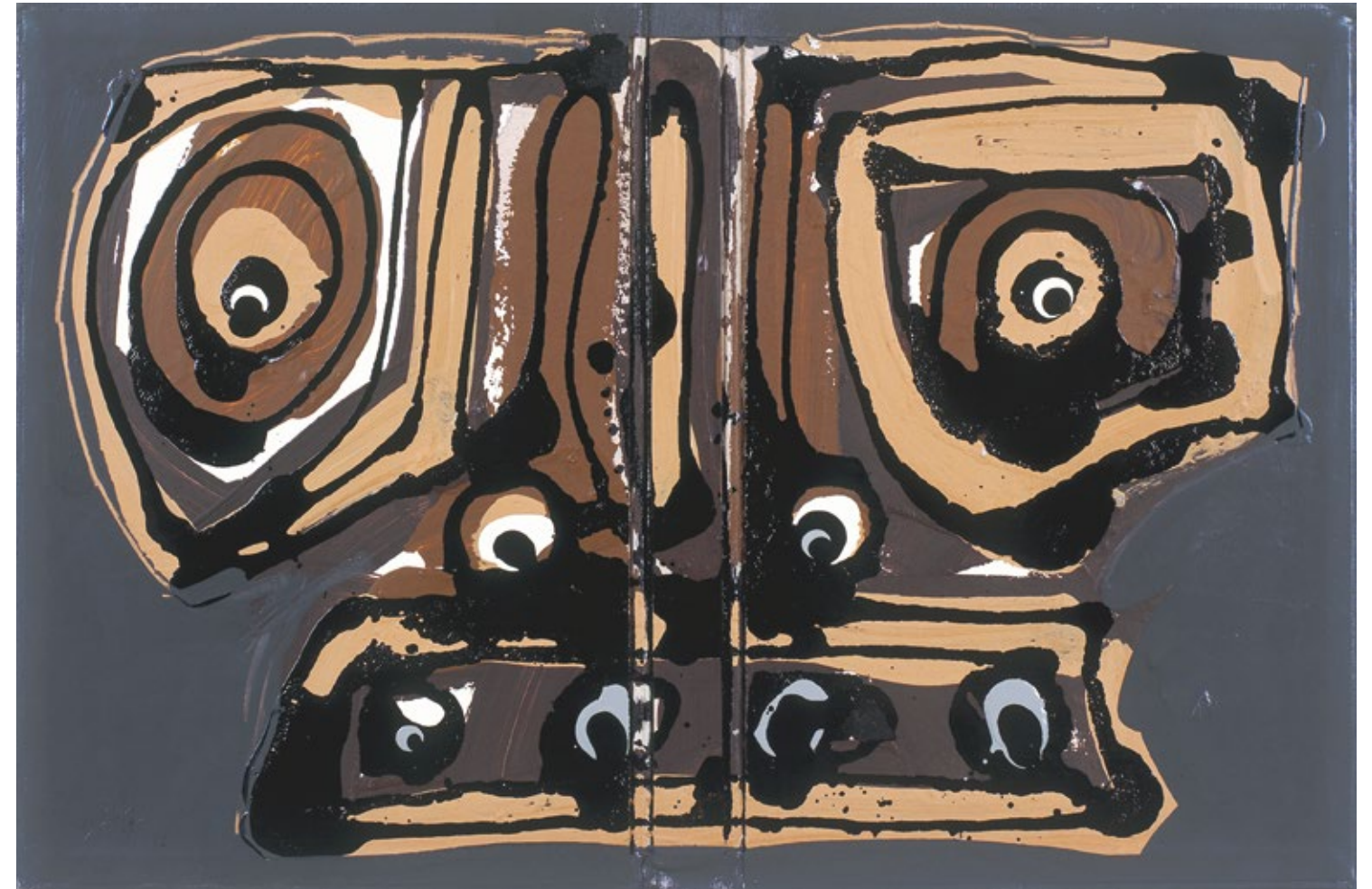
“*Auto-da-fé* is a suite of paintings made on the torn-out covers of books which, for different reasons, had lost their initial coherence and attraction. (...) Originating in the inquisitorial destruction of treatises and manuals, justified in the name of all-powerful desire, and not in censorship, the results strike me as belonging to a special branch of critique, as much as to plastic thinking, being at once iconoclastic indulgence and a rebirth from ashes. In any case, the faces that contemplate us, arising from liquid and random technique, speak of a dual situation born from the sleep of reason.”

“Auto de fe” in *Antonio Saura por sí mismo*, archives antonio saura y Lunwerg Editores, Geneva, 2009, p.57

## Autodafé

1986

Acrylic and lacquer on board  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 86' on the lower left  
34,6 x 52,3 cm | 13.6 x 20.6 in





**Autodafé**

1986

Acrylic and lacquer on board  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 86' on the upper center  
34,1 x 56,3 cm | 13.4 x 22.2 in



**Autodafé**

1986

Acrylic and lacquer on board  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 86' on the upper center  
29,8 x 51,4 cm | 11.7 x 20.2 in



**Autodafé**

1986

Acrylic and lacquer on board  
Signed and dated twice 'SAURA / 86' on the upper left and the upper right  
30,9 x 48,9 cm | 12.2 x 19.3 in



**Autodafé**

1989

Acrylic and lacquer on board  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 89' on the lower left  
34,2 x 52,8 cm | 13.5 x 20.8 in

**Autodafé**

1989

Acrylic and lacquer on board  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 89' on the lower center  
29,8 x 50,5 cm | 11.7 x19.9 in



**Autodafé**

1990

Acrylic and lacquer on board  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 90' on the lower center  
30,4 x 54,8 cm | 12 x 21.6 in





*Cabeza, 1986*

## Heads / Shrouds

“Focus on the labyrinth of the face. Invent a new face along the way. Forgetting it first. Then producing blind structures. Add signs wherever required, erase wherever necessary. Mix waters of different density. Emerge-behind, emerge-before, articulation-disarticulation, everything transparent. Conserve miraculous areas. Sacrifice for the greater good of the organic machine. All heart and guts. Architecture struggling in confusion, clarifying itself in another breathable ordered confusion. Danger of excess. Never finish. Barely a few touches. Impossible to remove anything, impossible to add anything.”

“Sudarios” in *Antonio Saura por sí mismo*, archives antonio saura y Lunwerg Editores, Geneva, 2009, p.85

**Portrait**

1960

Oil on canvas  
Signed and dated 'A. Saura 60' on the upper left  
73,3 x 62,2 cm | 28.9 x 24.5 in

PROVENANCE  
Biosca, Madrid  
Private collection, 1961  
Private collection (by descent)

EXHIBITED  
Aldeburgh, Aldeburgh Festival of Music and Arts, June 1963  
Norwich, Norwich Castle Museum, *Fine Paintings from East Anglia*,  
30 May - 30 August 1964, no. 59, p. 24

LITERATURE  
This work will be included in the forthcoming Catalogue Raisonné  
being prepared by the Archives Antonio Saura Foundation, Geneva



**Infanta**

1962

Oil on canvas  
162,5 x 130 cm | 64 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE  
Galerie Stadler, Paris  
Galerie Pierre Matisse, New York  
Sotheby's, London, 6 February 2003, lot 27  
Private collection

EXHIBITED  
New York, Pierre Matisse Gallery, *Antonio Saura*, 1964  
Lugano, Villa Malpensata, Museum of Modern Art, *Antonio Saura*,  
1994, no 24, ill. in colour p. 57 and ill. p. 133

LITERATURE  
Gérard de Cortanze, *Antonio Saura*, Editions de La Différence,  
Paris, 1994, ill. p. 125



**Autorretrato**

1966

Oil on canvas  
Signed and dated 'Saura 66' on the lower left  
59,7 x 73 cm | 23.5 x 28.7 in

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, Madrid, Spain  
Private collection, Portugal  
Palacio do Correio Velho, Lisbon, 6 April 2016, lot 505  
Marlborough Gallery, New York, USA  
Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, USA





**Portrait n°4**

1974  
 Gouache and India ink on printed paper (overlay)  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 74' on the reverse  
 31,1 x 21,3 cm | 12.2 x 8.4 in



**La Quinta del Sordo**

1974  
 Gouache, India ink and graphite on printed paper (overlay)  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 74' on the lower right  
 26,7 x 18,8 cm | 10.5 x 7.4 in

Suaire

1986  
Collage and India ink  
Signed and dated 'SAURA /86' on the lower right  
47,1 x 49,6 cm | 18.5 x 19.5 in





**Cabeza**

1986

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 86' on the lower right  
 60,5 x 51,3 cm | 23.8 x 20.2 in



**Cabeza**

1986

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 86' on the lower right  
 60,5 x 51,3 cm | 23.8 x 20.2 in

**Don 2**

1989

Oil on canvas  
130 x 96,9 cm | 51.2 x 38.1 in

PROVENANCE  
Galerie Pierre Huber, Geneva  
Galeria Sarda, Barcelona  
Private collection, 1990

EXHIBITED  
Zaragoza, Palacio de Sástago, Saura Decenario: 1980-1990, 1991,  
no. 28, ill. in colour p. 12

LITERATURE  
This artwork will be included in the forthcoming Catalogue  
Raisonné being prepared by the Archives Antonio Saura  
Foundation, Geneva



## DON 1.91

1991

Oil on canvas  
130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in

### EXHIBITED

Bern, Kunstmuseum Bern, Antonio Saura: Die Retrospektive.  
6 July - 11 November, 2012; Museum Wiesbaden 30 November,  
2012 - 24 March, 2013, ill. p. 156

### LITERATURE

Matthias Frehner, Natalia Granero, Antonio Saura,  
Die Retrospektiv, Hatje Cantz, Berlin, 2012





# Les Yeux de la Maure 7/2

1994

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed 'SAURA' on the lower left and dated '7/2' on the lower right  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



# Les Yeux de la Maure 15/11

1994

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed 'SAURA' on the upper left and dated '15/11' on the lower right  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



## Portrait imaginaire

1994

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 94' on the center right  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



## Curé

1994

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 94' on the lower right  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



### Torquemada

1994  
 Gouache and India ink on paper  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 94' on the center left  
 41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



### Cabeza

1996  
 Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 96' on the upper right  
 41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in

Portrait

1996

Oil on canvas  
Signed and dated 'Saura /96' on the upper right  
73 x 59,5 cm | 28.7 x 23.4 in

PROVENANCE  
Private collection

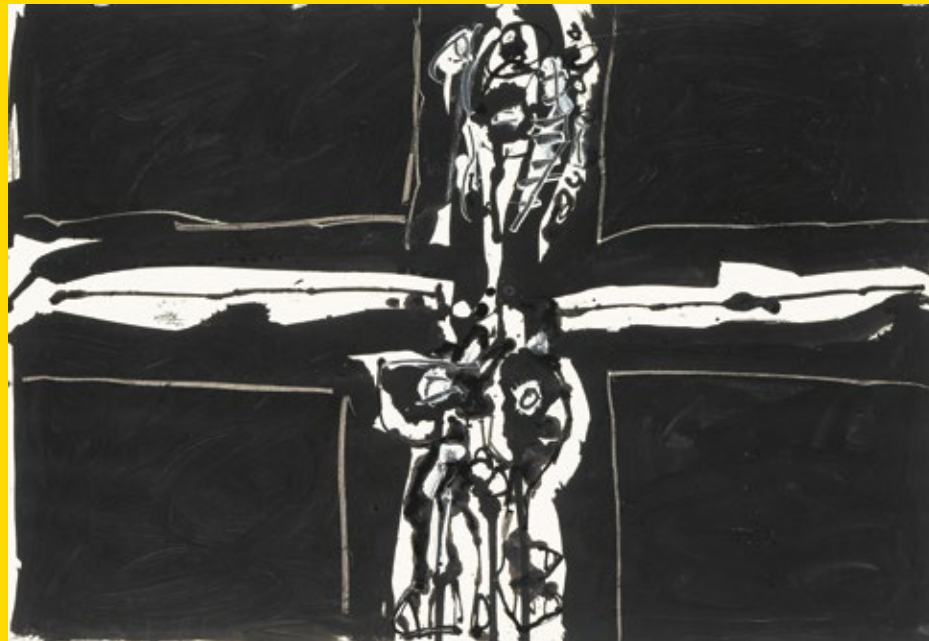


**Sudario XI**

1997

Gouache, tinta china y grafito sobre papel  
Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 97' on ther lower center  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in





*Crucifixión, 1960*

## Crucifixions

“Unlike Velázquez’s *Christ*, I have tried to destabilize an image and breathe an air of protest into it. In these works, one can glimpse an act of humour bordering on blasphemy, but I do not believe it can be reduced to just that. In the image of a crucifixion I have perhaps captured my own situation as *a man alone* in a threatening universe, in the face of which there is the possibility of a scream, but also, on the other side of the mirror, I am simply interested in the tragedy of a man—a man and not a God—absurdly nailed to a cross. An image which, like the man in the white shirt holding his hands up before the firing squad in Goya, or the mother in Picasso’s *Guernica*, could be a tragic symbol of our time.”

“Crucifixiones” in *Antonio Saura por sí mismo*, archives antonio saura y Lunweg Editores, Geneva, 2009, p.91

Crucifixión

1959-1960

Oil on canvas  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 59-60' on the upper right  
130 x 162 cm | 51.2 x 63.8 in

PROVENANCE  
Succession Antonio Saura  
Private collection, Geneva, Switzerland

EXHIBITED  
Strasbourg, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, 2002 ;  
Stockholm, Edsvik Konst och Kultur, 2002 ; Linz, Nordica, Museum  
der Stadt, 2002 ; Cracovie, Musée National, 2003 ; Amstelveen,  
Cobra Museum, 2004, *Antonio Saura, Crucifixions / Crucifixiones*,  
Ediciones del Umbral, Madrid, 2002, Ediciones del Umbral, Madrid  
2002, ill. in front page and pp. 84-85.  
Bern, Kunstmuseum Bern, 2012 ; Wiesbaden, Museum Wiesbaden,  
2012-2013, *Antonio Saura / Die Retrospektive*, Hatje Cantz, Berlin,  
2012, no. 199, ill. p.284.

LITERATURE  
*Saura*, Galleria Odyssia, Edizioni Galleria Odyssia, Rome 1959,  
n° 20, ill. p. 29.





## Crucifixión

1960

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 60' on the upper right  
17 x 22,4 cm | 6.7 x 8.8 in



## Crucifixión

1960

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 60' on the lower right  
17 x 23,4 cm | 6.7 x 9.2 in



### Crucifixión

1960

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 60' on the center right  
17 x 23,4 cm | 6.7 x 9.2 in



### Crucifixión

1960

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 60' on the center right  
62,4 x 90 cm | 24.6 x 35.4 in

**Crucifixión**

1960  
Gouache, India ink and graphite  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 60' on the center left  
62,5 x 90,2 cm | 24.6 x 35.5 in



**Crucifixión**

1960

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 60' on the center right  
62,5 x 90 cm | 24.6 x 35.4 in





*Dame*, 1983

## Ladies

“Beyond futile debates on figurative or abstract art, beyond all purist, fanatical, aesthetic or theoretical concerns, there is a pressing need to cry out, to completely take over surfaces and to leave traces behind, to express oneself no matter how, laying bare the energetic possibility of being, of painting as a form of living well through the affectionate or destructive image of a woman’s body, of nothing or of everything, of despair or cosmic hunger, of an expanding totality or a concentric dynamic.”

“Damas” in *Antonio Saura por sí mismo*, archives antonio saura y Lunwerg Editores, Geneva, 2009, p.101

**Mirra**

1956

Oil on canvas  
Signed and dated 'Saura 56' on the upper right  
161 x 130 cm | 63.4 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE

Rodolphe Stadler collection, Paris, France  
Christie's, Paris, 4 June 2013, lot 16  
Private collection, Paris, France

LITERATURE

Gérard de Cortanze, Antonio Saura, La Différence, Paris, 1994,  
ill. in colours p. 106

The Fondation Archives Antonio Saura  
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



**Nule**

1958

Oil on canvas  
162 x 130 cm | 63.8 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE  
Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York  
Edward Tyler Nahem Gallery, New York  
Private collection, Asturias, 2005

EXHIBITED  
Barcelona, Sala Gaspar, *Exposición de 4 pintores del grupo El Paso*,  
1959, n.n.  
Paris, Galeria Mayoral, *Saura. Brigitte Bardot et autres dames*,  
22 November 2019 - 1 February 2020, n.n., ill.



Montage - Deux dames, foule et tête

1959-1960

Gouache, ink and collage on paper  
Titled, signed and dated 'Foule Saura 60' on the upper left ; signed and dated 'Saura 59' on the upper right; signed and dated 'Saura 60' on the lower right; signed and dated 'Saura 60' on the lower left  
70,4 x 50,4 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in

PROVENANCE  
Mr and Mrs F.H. Porter Trust Estate collection



**Lolita**

1960

Oil on canvas  
Signed and dated on the lower right  
162 x 130 cm | 63.8 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, Paris



**Marilyn**

1974

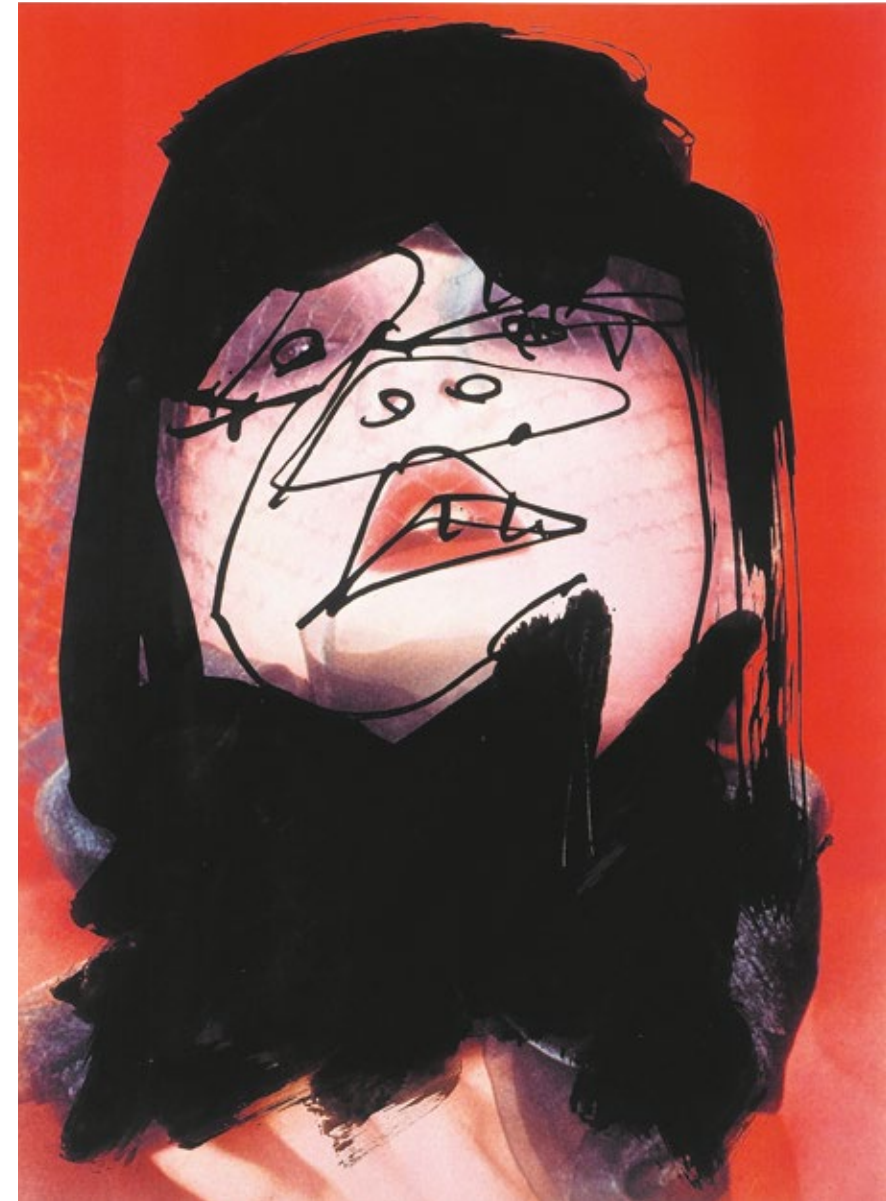
Acrylic, gouache and India ink on printed paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 74' on the lower left  
44,3 x 29,8 cm | 17.4 x 11.7 in



## Dame rouge

1974

India ink on printed paper (overlay) pasted on white cardboard  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 74' on the lower right, on the base  
42,8 x 35,8 cm | 16.9 x 14.1 in



**Dame**

1982

Acrylic, gouache and India ink on cardboard mounted on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 82' on the lower center  
101 x 72,5 cm | 39.8 x 28.5 in



## Dame

1983

Lacquer paint (Titanlux) on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 83' on the reverse  
65,3 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in



## Dame

1983

Lacquer paint (Titanlux) on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 83' on the reverse  
65,4 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in



**Dame**

1983

Lacquer paint (Titanlux) on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 83' on the reverse  
65,3 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in



## Dame

1983

Lacquer paint (Titanlux) on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 83' on the reverse  
65,3 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in





**Carmen**

1983

India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 83' on the upper right  
29,7 x 22 cm | 11.7 x 8.7 in



**Carmen**

1983

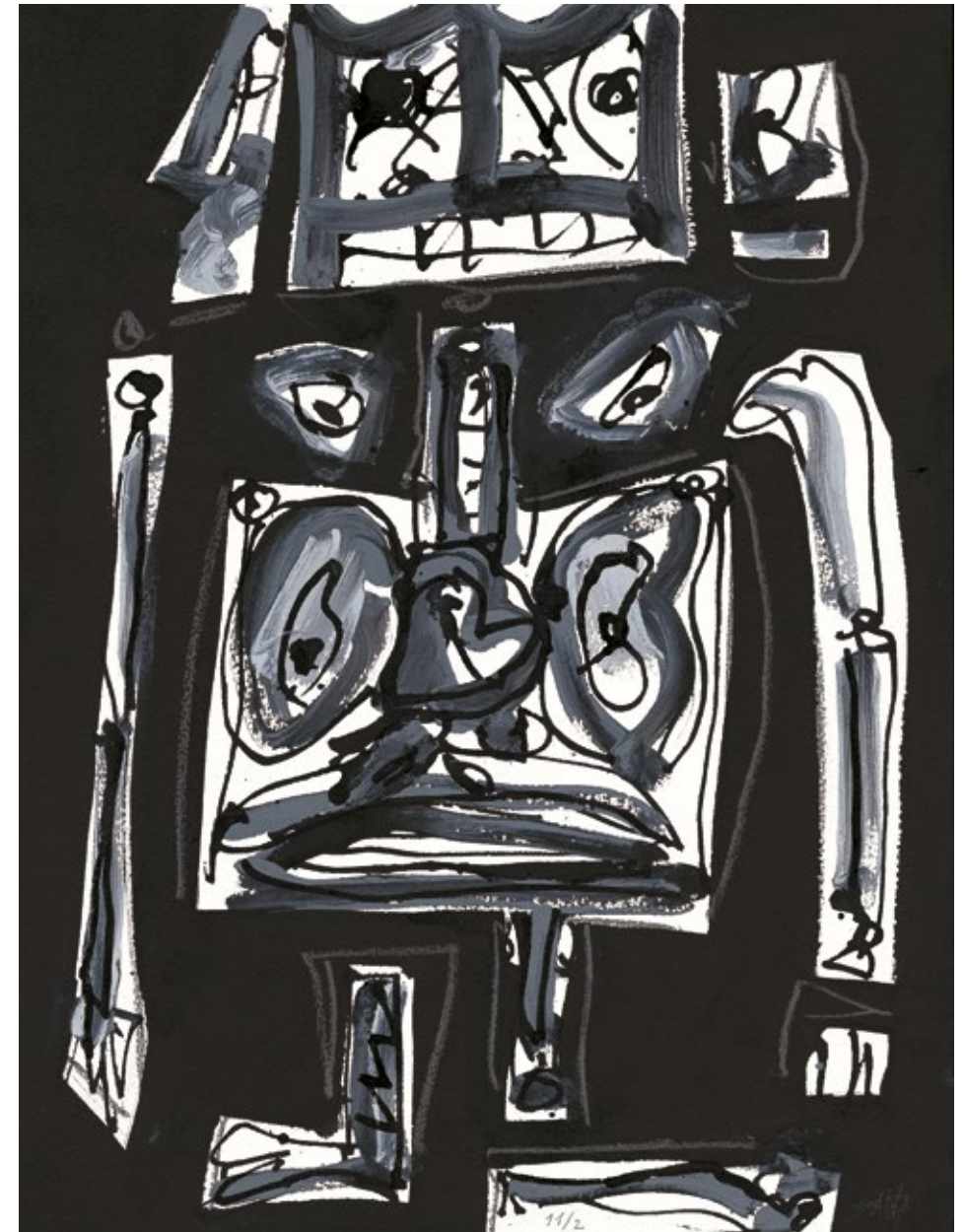
India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 83' on the lower right  
30 x 22,5 cm | 11.8 x 8.9 in



## Carmen

1983

India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 83' on the lower right  
32,8 x 25,3 cm | 12.9 x 10 in



## Dame 11/2

1994

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed 'SAURA' on the lower right, dated '11/2' on the lower center  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



*Nu Paysage 2, 1980*

## Nudeslandscapes

“The first time I saw a naked woman lying on a bed, faced with the dazzling spectacle of her smooth, dark body, I immediately thought of an elongated sea conch. In the faraway distance of myths, nature was believed to be a vast fertile woman’s body, Cézanne spoke of painting hills like women’s breasts, while obscene graffiti can take you back to the primordial aureole, and the remote bone forms chiselled with hammer blows then painstaking polished conserve the sacred impression of the genesic instinct and all-powerful desire. Coupled with obscure intuitions, similar concepts have always been foremost in my mind.”

“Desnudos” in Antonio Saura por sí mismo, archives antonio saura y Lunwerg Editores, Geneva, 2009, p.153



# Nu Paysage 1

1980

Lacquer paint (Titanlux), gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 80' on the reverse  
 31,2 x 39,4 cm | 12.3 x 15.5 in



# Nu Paysage 2

1980

Lacquer paint (Titanlux), gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
 Signed and dated 'SAURA / 80' on the reverse  
 31,1 x 39,7 cm | 12.2 x 15.6 in



*Foule, 1966*

## Crowds

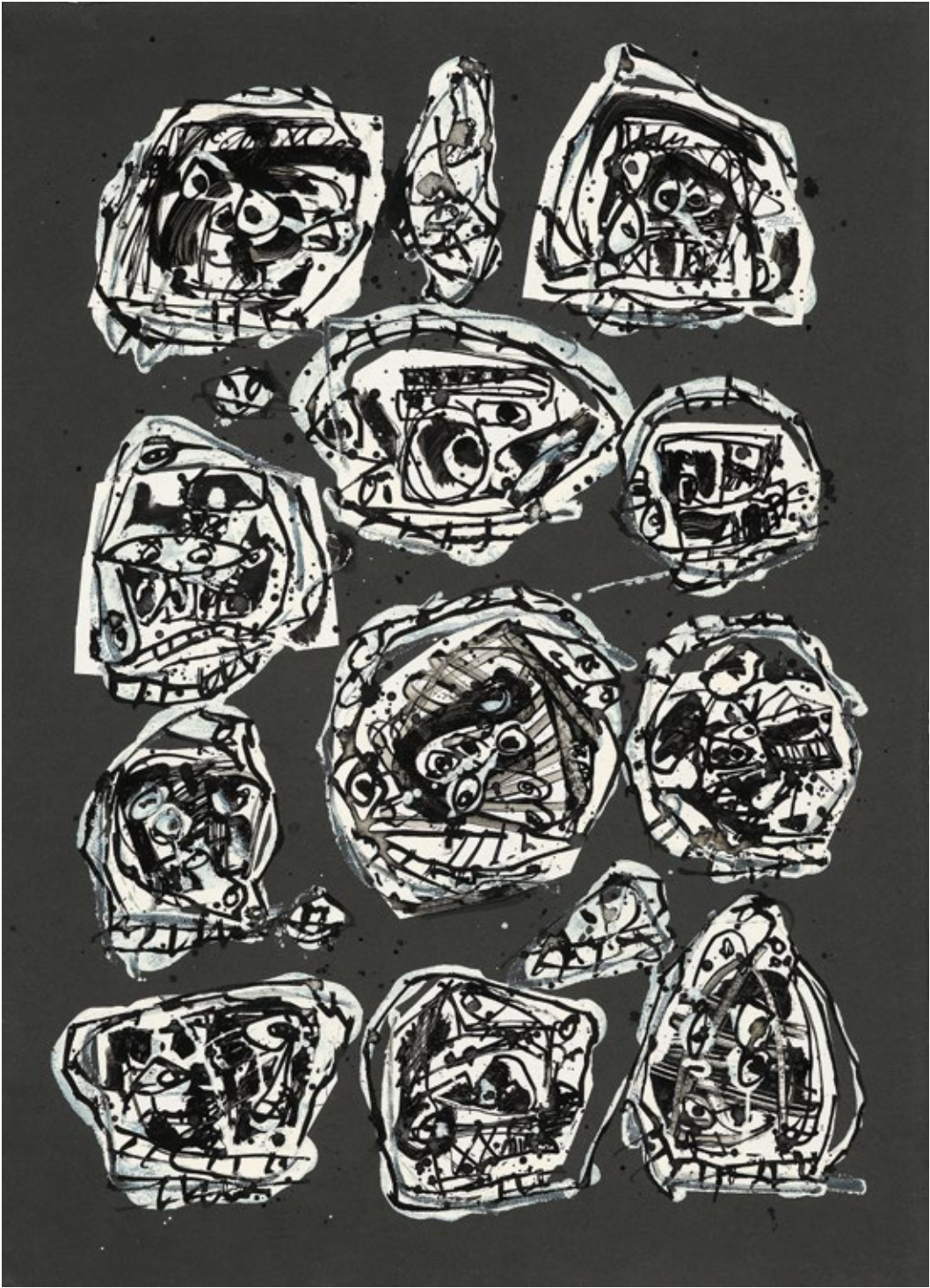
“Other selves gradually emerge in the camera obscura, and in pride of place a shadowy elongated painting made of continuous mobile structures pitted with the gleaming eyes of a beast. An imperfect oval, teeming and dark, flora in a dun-coloured space inside the oval, to the fore the flat black cropping of a billy goat, the advancing cloud of a coven of charcoal faces and golden earth.”

“Multitudes” in *Antonio Saura por sí mismo*, archives antonio saura y Lunwerg Editores, Geneva, 2009, p.161

Accumulation

1959

Elements mounted on paper, gouache, India ink and collage on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 59' on the upper right  
70 x 51 cm | 27.6 x 20.1 in



**Foule**

1959

Gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 59' on the lower right  
62,2 x 90 cm | 24.5 x 35.4 in





### Las mutaciones

1961

India ink on paper  
 Titled, signed and dated 'Las mutaciones / Saura / 61' on the lower right  
 62,6 x 90,2 cm | 24.6 x 35.5 in



### Multitud

1962

Gouache and India ink on paper  
 Titled, signed and dated 'Multitud / Saura / 61' on the lower right  
 62,1 x 90 cm | 24.4 x 35.4 in

**Foule**

1966

India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 66' on the upper right  
62,2 x 90 cm | 24.5 x 35.4 in

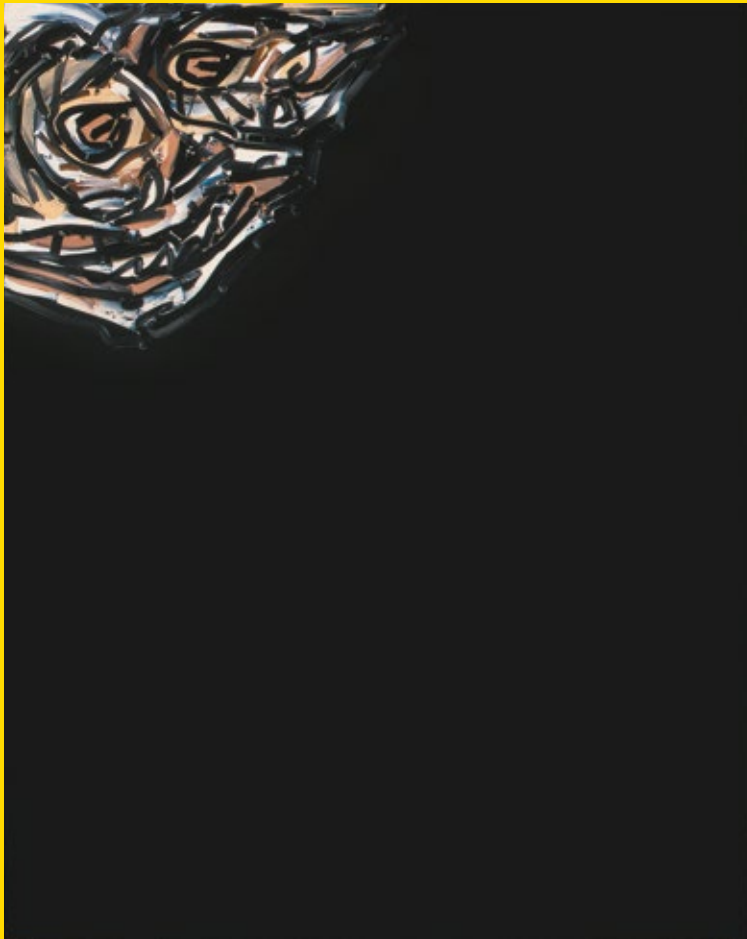


**Mutation 20/8**

1994

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed 'SAURA' on the lower right, dated '20/8' on the lower center  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in





*Le Chien de Goya, 1997*

## Goya's Dog

“Ever since childhood I have always been fascinated by an extreme image which, because of the twists and turns of fate, has always been associated with my memory of the ugly duckling from the children’s fairy tale and its sense of wonder when leaving the brood and contemplating the vastness of the wide world. This presence and its lingering memory have given rise to several large-format paintings on canvas, as well as many works on paper in which I have used the most varied techniques. The ideas of *emergence*, *birth* and *appearance* are necessarily associated with the accentuated presence of the void, repeating the premonitory presence of Goya’s dog on other levels.”

“El Perro de Goya” in *Antonio Saura por sí mismo*, archives antonio saura y Lunweg Editores, Geneva, 2009, p.171

**Le Chien de Goya**

1974

Acrylic paint, gouache and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 74' on the upper left  
70 x 50 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in



**Le Chien de Goya**

1982

Acrylic paint, gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 82' on the upper right  
70 x 50 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in



**Portrait imaginaire de Goya**

1984

Acrylic paint, gouache and India ink on paper  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 84' on the lower left  
70 x 50 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in



**Le Chien de Goya 3.85**

1985

Oil on canvas  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 85' on the lower right  
195 x 162 cm | 76.8 x 63.8 in





## El perro de Goya

1992

Paper

21,8 x 29,8 cm | 8.6 x 11.7 in



## El perro de Goya

1992

Acrylic on cardboard

Signed and dated 'SAURA / 92' on the reverse

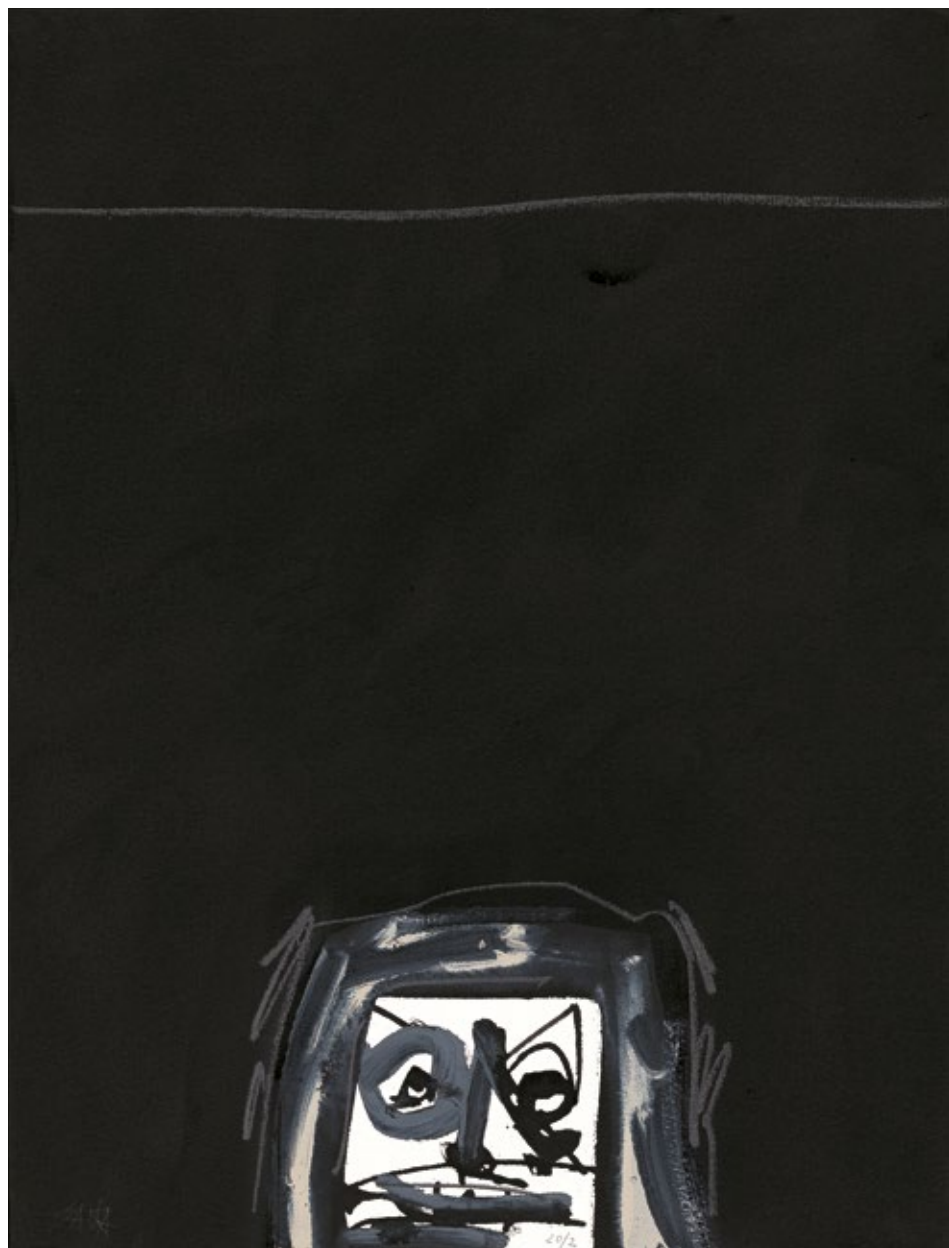
23,3 x 28,2 cm | 9.2 x 11.1 in

**El perro de Goya**

1992

Acrylic on cardboard  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 92' on the reverse  
21,8 x 29,8 cm | 8.6 x 11.7 in





### El perro de Goya

1994

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed 'SAURA' on the lower left, dated '20/2' on the lower center  
41 x 30 cm | 16.1 x 11.8 in



### Le Chien de Goya 12/11

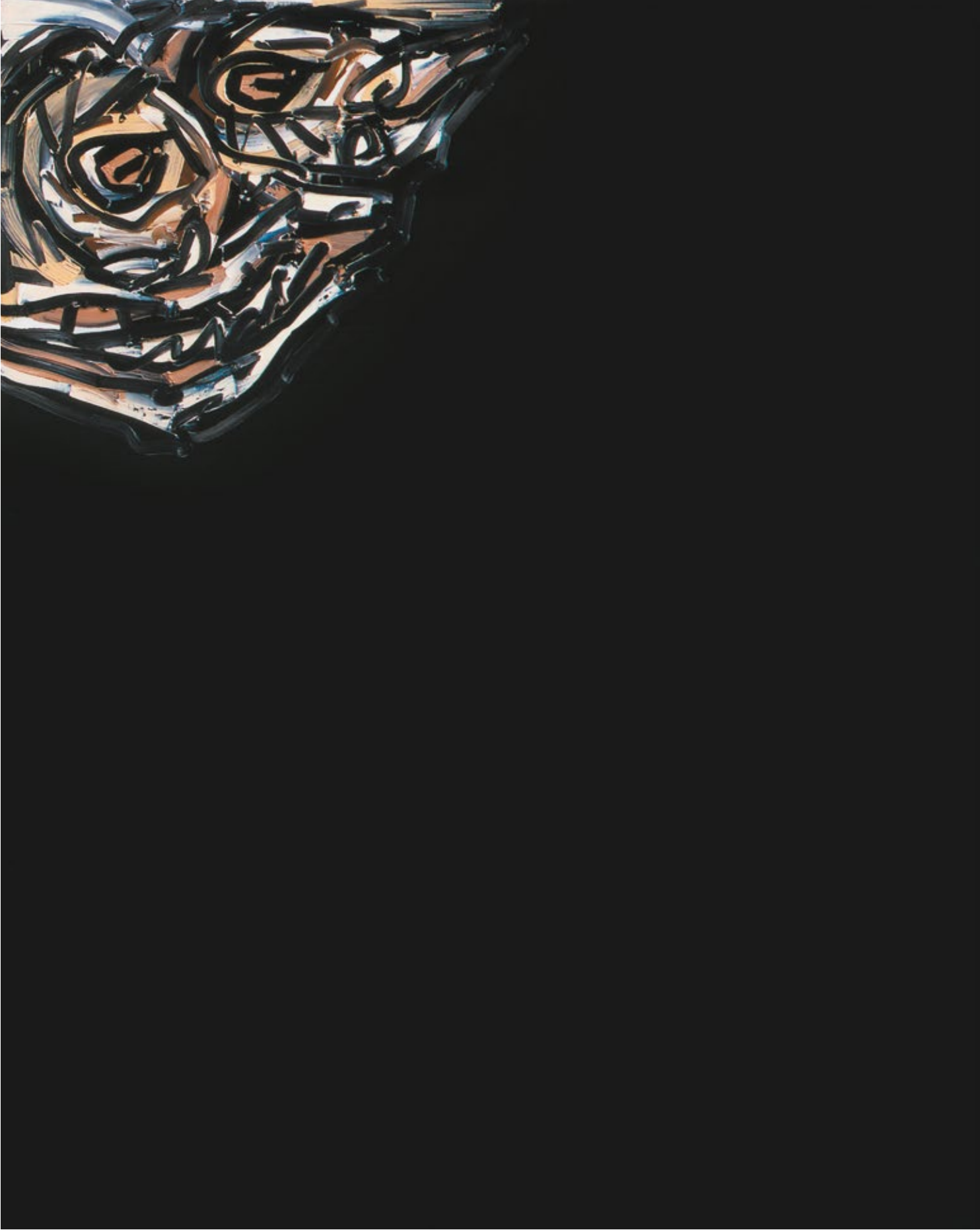
1994

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper  
Signed 'SAURA' on the lower left and dated '12/11' on the center right  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in

**Le Chien de Goya**

1997

Óleo sobre lienzo  
Signed and dated 'SAURA / 97' on the reverse  
162 x 130 cm | 63.8 x 51.2 in



**El perro de Goya**

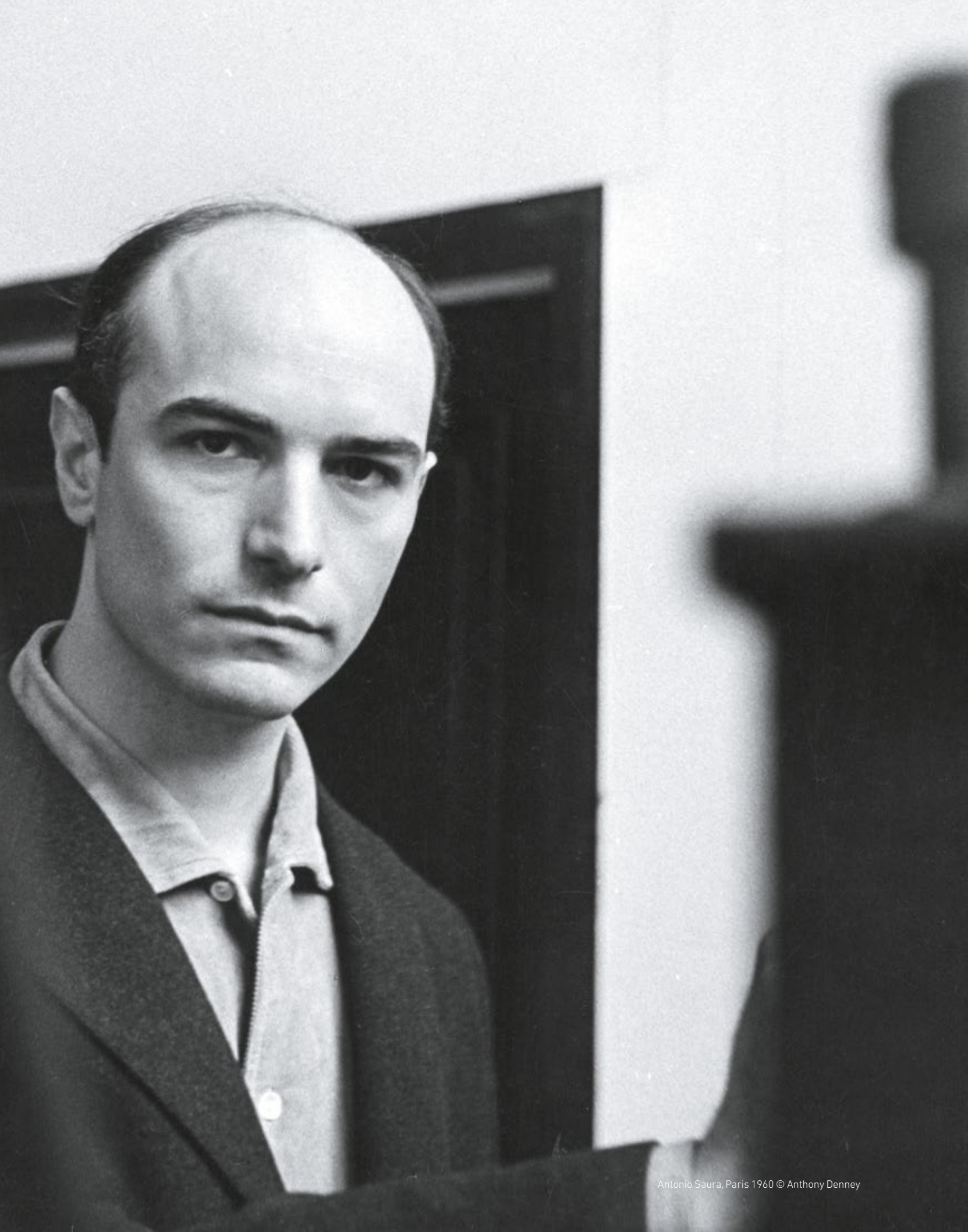
1997

Gouache, India ink and graphite on paper

Signed and dated 'SAURA / 97' on the lower right

41 x 30,8 cm | 16.1 x 12.1 in





Antonio Saura, Paris 1960 © Anthony Denney

## BIOGRAPHY ■

### 1930

Born in Huesca (Spain) on September 22, 1930.

### 1936 — 1939

During the Civil War, lives with his family in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. At the end of the war, lives in Huesca for a year and then returns to Madrid.

### 1943

Contracts tuberculosis, and has to undergo several operations which result in a five-year period of immobility.

### 1947

Self-taught as an artist, Saura starts to paint and write.

### 1950

First personal exhibition in the bookshop Libros in Saragossa of the experimental work he had developed over the two previous years. The series *Constellations* and *Rayograms*.

### 1951

*Landscape* series.

Publication of the poetic text *Programio*.

First exhibition in Madrid, in the Buchholz bookshop: *oneiric and surrealist works*.

First trip to Paris.

### 1953

Organises the exhibitions *Tendencias* and *Arte Fantástico* in Madrid.

### 1954 — 1955

Lives in Paris. Joins in the activities of the Surrealist group. Paintings which are organic and random in concept, on canvas and paper, using a wide variety of techniques.

*Phenomena* series and *Grattages*. Paints for the first time using the structure of the female body as the source of inspiration.

Marries *Madeleine Augot*.

### 1956

Presents a collection of his works at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, together with his first paintings realised entirely in black and white. *Women* and *Self-portraits* series.

### 1957

First exhibition in Paris, at the Galerie Stadler (*preface to the catalogue by Michel Tapié*).

Founds the *El Paso* Group, which he leads until it breaks up in 1960. Conferences and publication of several texts and manifestos. Realises the first *Crucifixions* and various series of satirical pieces on paper.

Birth of his daughter Marina.

### 1958

Makes the first *Imaginary portraits*, which include the series devoted to Brigitte Bardot.

Participates in the Venice Biennale, together with Eduardo Chillida and Antoni Tàpies.

### 1959

Makes several series of large-format paintings, on themes which recur throughout his work: *Shrouds, Portraits, Nudes, Nudes/Landscapes, Priests and Crowds*.

Start of his *printed works* with the series of lithographs entitled *Pintiquiniestras*.

Publishes the essay *Espacio y gesto*.

First exhibition with Antoni Tàpies, at the Galerie van de Loo (Munich). Participates in "Documenta 2", Kassel.

Commits himself to political action, which he continues until the end of the Franco period.

Birth of his daughter Ana.

### 1960

Abandons exclusive use of black and white. Begins series *Imaginary portraits, Vertical women* and *Profiles and hats*. Works on paper: *Accumulations, Narrations* and *Repetitions*.

Realises several *sculptures*.

Receives the Guggenheim Award (New York).

### 1961

First exhibition at the *Pierre Matisse Gallery* (New York).

### 1962

First etchings and silk screens. *Mentira y sueño*, a series of satirical drawings and paintings on paper.

Publication in Rome by the *Galleria Odyssia* of a work devoted to the *Crucifixions*, with text by Enrico Crispolti.

Birth of his daughter Elena.

### 1963

Several retrospectives: *Stedelijk Museum, Eindhoven*; Rotterdam Kunstring; and in museums in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro (works on paper).

Designs the set of *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* by Federico García Lorca, staged in Madrid for the first time, directed by Juan Antonio Bardem.

### 1964

Retrospective of paintings on paper and prints, organised by Eddy de Wilde at the *Stedelijk Museum*, Amsterdam, at the Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, and at the Konsthalle, Göteborg.

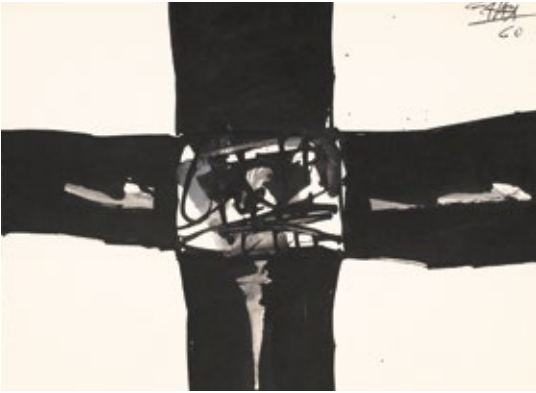
Second exhibition at the *Pierre Matisse Gallery* (New York).

Designs fourteen *stained-glass windows* for the Jordan Pavilion at the International Fair in New York, as well as a series of colour lithographs entitled *Historia de España*.

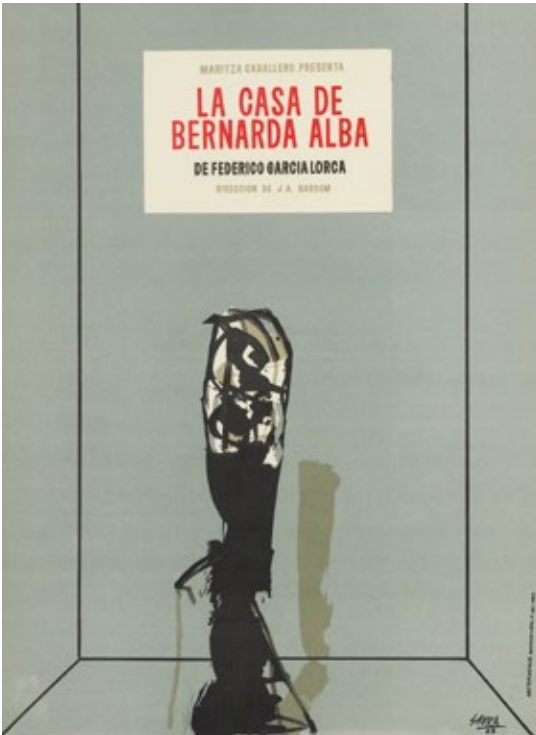
Participates in Documenta III in Kassel. Receives the Carnegie Prize with Eduardo Chillida and Pierre Soulages.

### 1965

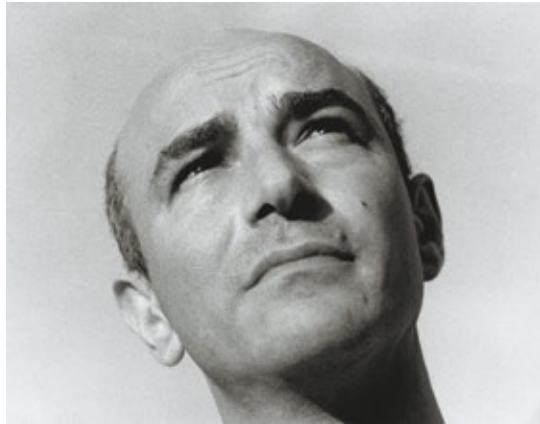
Destroys one hundred canvases (Cuenca).



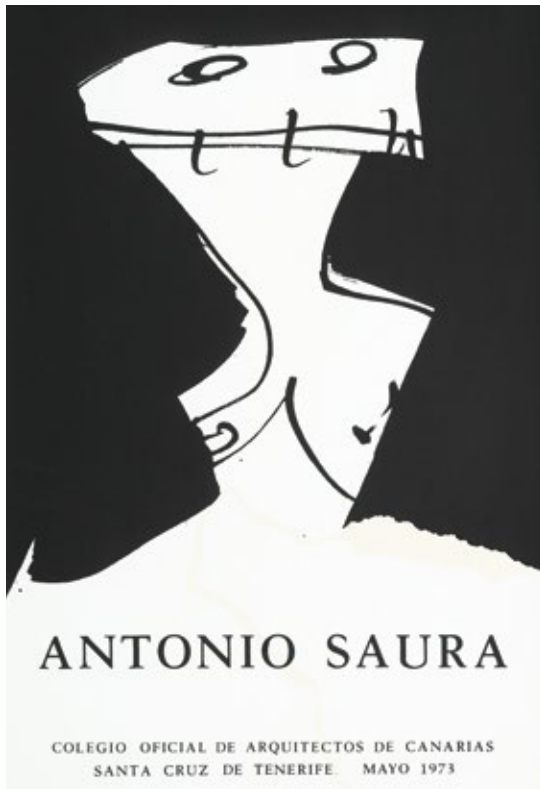
Antonio Saura, *Crucifixión*, 1960



Poster for *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*, 1963  
© Succession Antonio Saura



Antonio Saura, La Habana 1970 © Ad Petersen



Poster of the exhibition at the Colegio oficial de Arquitectos de Canarias, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canarias, 1973  
© Succession Antonio Saura

### 1966

First trip to Cuba and retrospective of works on paper at the Casa de las Américas (Havana).

Exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, organised by Roland Penrose.

Begins the series *Women in an armchair* as well as a new series *Imaginary portraits*.

Receives the Grand Prix at the Biennial of Engraving "Bianco e nero" in Lugano.

### 1967

Makes Paris his permanent base. Works during the summer in Cuenca.

Exhibits *Women in an armchair* and *Imaginary portraits* at the Galerie Stadler. Begins series *Imaginary portraits of Goya* and *Goya's Dog*.

New auto-da-fé at Cuenca, at which event he again destroys around a hundred canvases.

### 1968

Abandons painting in oils for ten years and devotes himself exclusively to works on paper.

Participates in the *Congreso cultural* in Havana.

### 1969

The editor Gustavo Gili publishes his *first significant monograph* in Barcelona. Text by José Ayllón.

### 1970

Spends most of the year in Havana.

### 1971

Realises lithographs at the Centre genevois de gravure contemporaine, Geneva, together with a series of drawings to illustrate *Trois visions* de Quevedo (editor Yves Rivière). Executes several series of silk screens: *The King* (with Lezama Lima), *Rembrandt* (with Bert Schierbeek), *Le Chien de Goya* (with Jean-Clarence Lambert).

Marries Mercedes Beldarraín.

### 1972

Attack carried out by an extreme right-wing group at a retrospective of his works on paper at the Galería Juana Mordó (Madrid).

Realises several *Large-scale montages* and several series of *Transformations* including *La Quinta del Sordo*.

### 1973

Exhibition at the Colegio de Arquitectos de Santa Cruz de Tenerife of a retrospective of his works on paper. Continues the series of *Transformations*.

Participates in the World Peace Congress celebrated in Moscow.

### 1974

Retrospective of his works on paper at the Centre M-11, Seville.

Works on a set of *Large-scale montages* and continues the series of *Transformations*.

## 1975

Retrospective of his works on paper at the *Galería Maeght*, Barcelona.

First trip to Mexico where he exhibits (Galería Juan Martín).

## 1976

Mainly works on lithographs on zinc in the workshops of Clot, Bramsen & Georges in Paris and creates the series of silk screens entitled *Moi* (Myself), edited by Gustavo Gili. Is one of the organising committee for the Venice Biennale, in which he takes part.

## 1977

Starts to publish his *writings*.

Creates the *Cámara ardiente*, an illustrated book with twelve etchings.

Thanks to numerous protests and shows of support, the expulsion measure to remove him from France is set aside.

Participates in Documenta VI in Kassel.

## 1978

Exhibits a collection of his most recent graphic works at the Fondation nationale des arts graphiques et plastiques in Paris. Participates in the “Primer Encuentro Iberoamericano de Críticos de Arte y Artistas Plásticos” in Caracas and publishes *Notas para una discusión*.

Starts again to paint in oil on canvas and makes a number of original painted books.

## 1979

The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, organises a *retrospective* of his work under the curatorship of Ad Petersen, to be shown later at the Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, and the following year at the Casa de Alhajas, Sala Tiépolo, Madrid, and the Fundación Joan Miró, Barcelona.

Prize at the First Biennial of European Graphic Art, Heidelberg.

In Cuenca, an arson attack destroys some of his archives and collections.

## 1980

Contributes to the debate “Pour un portrait de Salvador Dalí” at the Centre Georges Pompidou.

From this time on, each year, he contributes to many seminars, colloquia and conferences on art and culture.

## 1981

Retrospective of his works on paper at the Caja de la Inmaculada, Saragossa.

Is made Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France).



Antonio Saura's studio, Paris 1974 © Augustin Dumage



Poster of *OTAN NO*, 1986 © Succession Antonio Saura

## 1982

The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid, organises a travelling exhibition of his graphic work, to be shown in several cities in Spain.

Publishes a pamphlet entitled *Contra el Guernica*.

Receives the Medalla de Oro de Bellas Artes from King Juan Carlos.

## 1983

Paints and exhibits the first *Dora Maar* series at the Galerie Stadler. A text by Pierre Daix accompanies the exhibition catalogue entitled “*Dora Maar d’après Dora Maar/Portraits raisonnés avec chapeau*”.

Designs the set of the ballet *Carmen*, directed by Carlos Saura and Antonio Gades at the Théâtre de Paris, and of *Peixos Abissals* by Joan Baixas at the Teatro La Claca, Barcelona.

President of the Paris Organising Committee for “*World artists against apartheid*”.

José María Berzosa realises a film for television about his work.

His daughter Elena dies in an accident.

## 1984

Begins the series of paintings entitled *Autodafé* made on the torn-off covers of books.

## 1985

Gives a course at the “Taller de arte actual” at the Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid.

Designs the stage scenery *Woyzeck* directed by Eusebio Lázaro in Madrid.

Creates *Die Mauer*, an art book of superimposed paintings.

The *Cabinet des estampes*, Geneva, presents a retrospective of his printed works. First catalogue raisonné of his printed work by Mariuccia Galfetti.

Realises a set of large-format paintings in acrylics and in oils.

## 1986

The Neue Galerie-Sammlung, Aachen, organises a retrospective thematic exhibition.

Co-runs the seminar “El arte y el mal” at the UIMP, Seville.

## 1987

Paints *Elegía*, a work of 20 x 10 m for the ceiling of the Diputación de Huesca. The preparatory drawings are the subject of a travelling exhibition.

Illustrates *Don Quijote de la Mancha* for the Círculo de Lectores. The originals are exhibited in various institutions and are still being shown around the world. Publication of the collective work *Figura y Fondo*.

## 1988

Makes lithographs illustrating Kafka's *Tagebücher*.

Publication of *El pintor ilustrado*, a collection of poems dedicated to the painter, and *Elegía*, a monograph with a preface by Guy Scarpetta and photos by Jean Bescós.

Co-runs the seminar "El sexo y el arte" at UIMP, Seville.

## 1989

The Wiener Secession presents a retrospective of his works on paper. Exhibition in anthology form at Harvard University, Cambridge (USA). The *Geneva Musée d'Art et d'Histoire* organises a thematic retrospective of his major canvases, curated by Rainer Michael Mason, subsequently to be shown at IVAM, Valencia (Spain) 1990, at the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, at the Lenbachhaus, Munich, and at the Réfectoire des Jacobins, Toulouse.

Following an operation on his eyes, begins painting again.

## 1990

Realises a set of large monotypes (editor Carles Taché).

The UIMP, Cuenca, and the Círculo de Lectores organise an exhibition of his illustrated books.

Publication of the book *La muerte y la nada* with text by Jacques Chessex.

Runs a course in drawing at the Fondazione Antoni Ratti, Como, and (jointly with Guy Scarpetta) the seminar "Escritura como pintura" at the UIMP, Seville.

Is made Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France).

Death of his daughter Ana.

## 1991

Participates with Carlos Saura and Luis García Navarro in the production of the opera *Carmen* for the Staatstheater, Stuttgart.

The Diputaciones of Huesca, Saragossa and Teruel organise a retrospective exhibition entitled "Decenario", subsequently shown at the Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona, and at the Palacio Almudí, Murcia.

Retrospective exhibition devoted to his books *Retrato de Antonio Saura* and *Las Tentaciones de Antonio Saura* (texts by Julián Ríos). Draws the illustrations to *Poesía y otros textos* by San Juan de la Cruz.

## 1992

Designs the exhibition *El perro de Goya* in the Salas del Arenal, Seville, and in the Museo de Bellas Artes, Saragossa.

The Círculo de Lectores organises the exhibition *Antonio Saura y los libros de su vida* to be shown in Madrid and then at the Institut Cervantès in Paris and in the Sala de la Corona de Aragón, Saragossa.

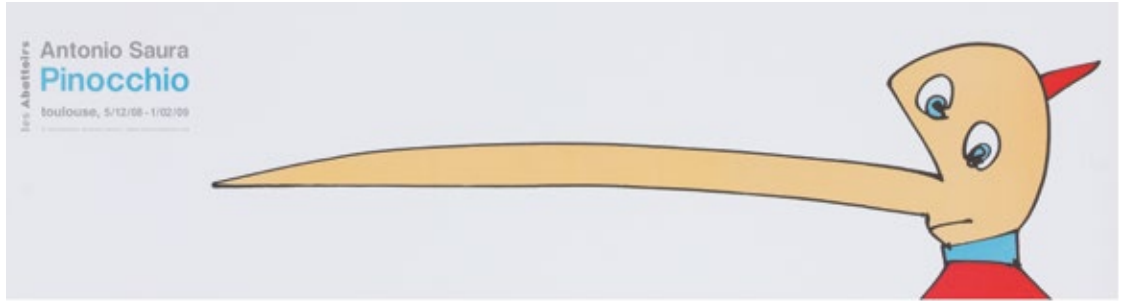
Publication of *Note book (memoria del tiempo)*.



Antonio Saura, Madrid, 1990, photographer unknown.  
Courtesy of Succession Antonio Saura



Poster for the opera *Carmen*, Staatstheater, Stuttgart, Germany, 1991  
© Succession Antonio Saura



Poster for the exhibition Antonio Saura, Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France, 2008-2009 © Succession Antonio Saura

## 1993

Designs the set of the ballet *El retablo de Maese Pedro* by Manuel de Falla for the Ballet de Saragossa.

Publication of *Belvédère Miró*.

Operation on his hip, which keeps him inactive for several months.

## 1994

The *Museo d'Arte Moderna, Lugano*, organises a retrospective of his work made between 1948 and 1990.

The Museo de Teruel presents an exhibition of his early works (*oneiric and surrealist works*), curated by Emmanuel Guigon.

Receives the Premio Aragón a las Artes.

Makes a series of 218 drawings and paintings on paper entitled *Nulla dies sine linea*.

## 1995

Illustrates *Las aventuras de Pinocho*, after Collodi, and for this he receives the prize for the best book of the year, awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture.

Receives the Grand Prix des Arts de la Ville de Paris and the Prix Liberté, awarded in Sarajevo.

With his brother Carlos, designs the staging and scenery for Bizet's opera *Carmen* at the Festival dei Due Mondi in Spoleto.

## 1996

Curator of the exhibition *Después de Goya, una mirada subjetiva*, at the Palacio de la Lonja and Palacio de Montemuzo, Saragossa.

## 1997

Paints and exhibits several large-format paintings at Daniel Lelong in Paris (*Crowds* and *Imaginary portraits of Goya*) together with a new series of *Portraits* and *Self-portraits*.

## 1998

Dies in Cuenca, July 22, 1998.

**For more information on collective and solo exhibitions, please visit: [www.antoniosaura.org/](http://www.antoniosaura.org/)**



INDEX ■

Auto-da-fé



p. 30 .....  
**Autodafé**  
 1986  
 34,6 x 52,3 cm | 13.6 x 20.6 in



p. 32 .....  
**Autodafé**  
 1986  
 34,1 x 56,3 cm | 13.4 x 22.2 in



p. 33 .....  
**Autodafé**  
 1986  
 29,8 x 51,4 cm | 11.7 x 20.2 in



p. 34 .....  
**Autodafé**  
 1986  
 30,9 x 48,9 cm | 12.2 x 19.3 in



p. 35 .....  
**Autodafé**  
 1989  
 34,2 x 52,8 cm | 13.5 x 20.8 in



p. 36 .....  
**Autodafé**  
 1989  
 29,8 x 50,5 cm | 11.7 x 19.9 in



p. 38 .....  
**Autodafé**  
 1990  
 30,4 x 54,8 cm | 12 x 21.6 in

Heads / Shrouds



p. 42 .....  
**Portrait**  
 1960  
 73,3 x 62,2 cm | 28.9 x 24.5 in



p. 44 .....  
**Infanta**  
 1962  
 162,5 x 130 cm | 64 x 51.2 in



p. 46 .....  
**Autorretrato**  
 1966  
 59,7 x 73 cm | 23.5 x 28.7 in



p. 48 .....  
**Portrait n°4**  
1974  
31,1 x 21,3 cm | 12.2 x 8.4 in



p. 49 .....  
**La Quinta del Sordo**  
1974  
26,7 x 18,8 cm | 10.5 x 7.4 in



p. 50 .....  
**Suaire**  
1986  
47,1 x 49,6 cm | 18.5 x 19.5 in



p. 52 .....  
**Cabeza**  
1986  
60,5 x 51,3 cm | 23.8 x 20.2 in

## Crucifixions



p. 70 .....  
**Crucifixión**  
1959-1960  
130 x 162 cm | 51.2 x 63.8 in



p. 72 .....  
**Crucifixión**  
1960  
17 x 22,4 cm | 6.7 x 8.8 in



p. 73 .....  
**Crucifixión**  
1960  
17 x 23,4 cm | 6.7 x 9.2 in



p. 53 .....  
**Cabeza**  
1986  
60,5 x 51,3 cm | 23.8 x 20.2 in



p. 54 .....  
**Don 2**  
1989  
130 x 96,9 cm | 51.2 x 38.1 in



p. 56 .....  
**DON 1.91**  
1991  
130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in



p. 58 .....  
**Les Yeux de la Maure 7/2**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 74 .....  
**Crucifixión**  
1960  
17 x 23,4 cm | 6.7 x 9.2 in



p. 75 .....  
**Crucifixión**  
1960  
62,4 x 90 cm | 24.6 x 35.4 in



p. 76 .....  
**Crucifixión**  
1960  
62,5 x 90,2 cm | 24.6 x 35.5 in



p. 78 .....  
**Crucifixión**  
1960  
62,5 x 90 cm | 24.6 x 35.4 in



p. 59 .....  
**Les Yeux de la Maure 15/11**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 60 .....  
**Portrait imaginaire**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 61 .....  
**Curé**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 62 .....  
**Torquemada**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in

## Ladies



p. 82 .....  
**Mirra**  
1956  
161 x 130 cm | 63.4 x 51.2 in



p. 84 .....  
**Nule**  
1958  
162 x 130 cm | 63.8 x 51.2 in



p. 86 .....  
**Montage - Deux dames, foule et tête.** 1959-1960  
70,4 x 50,4 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in



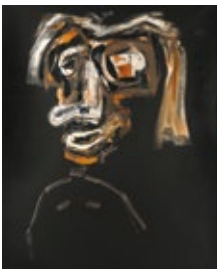
p. 63 .....  
**Cabeza**  
1996  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 64 .....  
**Portrait**  
1997  
73 x 59,5 cm | 28.7 x 23.4 in



p. 66 .....  
**Sudario XI**  
1997  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 88 .....  
**Lolita**  
1960  
162 x 130 cm | 63.8 x 51.2 in



p. 90 .....  
**Marilyn**  
1974  
44,3 x 29,8 cm | 17.4 x 11.7 in



p. 92 .....  
**Dame rouge**  
1974  
42,8 x 35,8 cm | 16.9 x 14.1 in



p. 94 .....  
**Dame**  
1982  
101 x 72,5 cm | 39.8 x 28.5 in



p. 96.....  
**Dame**  
1983  
65,3 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in



p. 98.....  
**Dame**  
1983  
65,4 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in



p. 100.....  
**Dame**  
1983  
65,3 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in



p. 102.....  
**Dame**  
1983  
65,3 x 50 cm | 25.7 x 19.7 in



p. 119.....  
**Multitud**  
1962  
62,1 x 90 cm | 24.4 x 35.4 in



p. 120.....  
**Foule**  
1966  
62,2 x 90 cm | 24.5 x 35.4 in



p. 122.....  
**Mutation 20/8**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 104.....  
**Carmen**  
1983  
29,7 x 22 cm | 11.7 x 8.7 in



p. 105.....  
**Carmen**  
1983  
30 x 22,5 cm | 11.8 x 8.9 in



p. 106.....  
**Carmen**  
1983  
32,8 x 25,3 cm | 12.9 x 10 in



p. 107.....  
**Dame 11/2**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in

Goya's Dog



p. 126.....  
**Le Chien de Goya**  
1974  
70 x 50 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in



p. 128.....  
**Le Chien de Goya**  
1982  
70 x 50 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in



p. 130.....  
**Portrait imaginaire de Goya**  
1984  
70 x 50 cm | 27.6 x 19.7 in

Nudeslandscapes



p. 110.....  
**Nu Paysage 1**  
1980  
31,2 x 39,4 cm | 12.3 x 15.5 in



p. 111.....  
**Nu Paysage 2**  
1980  
31,1 x 39,7 cm | 12.2 x 15.6 in



p. 132.....  
**Le Chien de Goya 3.85**  
1985  
195 x 162 cm | 76.8 x 63.8 in



p. 134.....  
**El perro de Goya**  
1992  
21,8 x 29,8 cm | 8.6 x 11.7 in



p. 135.....  
**El perro de Goya**  
1992  
23,3 x 28,2 cm | 9.2 x 11.1 in

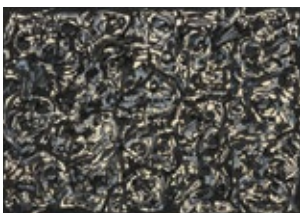


p. 136.....  
**El perro de Goya**  
1992  
21,8 x 29,8 cm | 8.6 x 11.7 in

Crowds



p. 114.....  
**Accumulation**  
1959  
70 x 51 cm | 27.6 x 20.1 in



p. 116.....  
**Foule**  
1961  
62,2 x 90 cm | 24.5 x 35.4 in



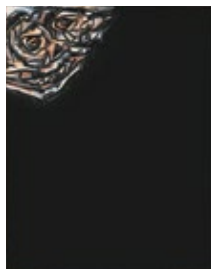
p. 118.....  
**Las mutaciones**  
1961  
62,6 x 90,2 cm | 24.6 x 35.5 in



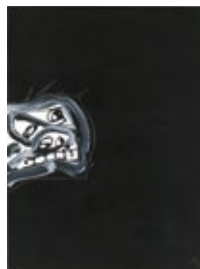
p. 138.....  
**El perro de Goya**  
1994  
41 x 30 cm | 16.1 x 11.8 in



p. 139.....  
**Le Chien de Goya 12/11**  
1994  
41 x 31 cm | 16.1 x 12.2 in



p. 140.....  
**Le Chien de Goya**  
1997  
162 x 130 cm | 63.8 x 51.2 in



p. 142.....  
**El perro de Goya**  
1997  
41 x 30,8 cm | 16.1 x 12.1 in



Antonio Saura in his studio, Cuenca 1998 © José María Alguersuari

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*SAURA, Painting at Will*

March 2024