

Diario de Sevilla

Matías Sánchez, the truth about painting

by Charo Ramos
February 21, 2020



Matías Sánchez poses in Delimbo Sevilla in front of the altarpiece that wraps up the exhibition. / JUAN CARLOS MUÑOZ

Matías Sánchez (Tübingen, 1972) had participated in the opening of the Madrid room of this gallery in 2018 but it is the first time that he exhibited with Delimbo in Seville, the city where this German raised in Isla Cristina has lived and worked for 30 years (Huelva). Self-taught artist, considered a scholar in materials, history and technique by many of his colleagues and contemporaries -generation that includes Miki Leal or Rubén Guerrero-, Sánchez has a great projection at this time in Asia and in European countries such as Germany, Portugal and Italy, reason why a Sevillian reunion of his latest works was looking forward to. The exhibition that he now presents by Laura Calvarro and Seleka in the restless gallery on Pérez Galdós street, "Pious Lies", allows him both to vindicate his credentials and to contribute a powerful symbolic charge to his defense of painting for the sake of painting. "We love to promote painters and artists who have not gone through traditional schools and formal training but who work contemporary art with their own

attitude, regardless of whether they have specialized in urban art, pop, punk, comics or, as in this case by Matías Sánchez, in a very personal type of figuration that includes both expressionist influences and abstract techniques".

Matías Sánchez made himself known with a powerful criticism towards the art market and the prevailing mediocrity in the institutions, with which he surprised in the 2002 and 2003 editions of ARCO, and he remains faithful to that rebellious poetics in this compilation of unpublished works ranging from 2014 to today. "His production", Seleka considers, "can be understood as a loudspeaker of the society in which we live and of the constant flow of images in which we develop, whether they come from television, the tabloid press or social networks".

The work of Matías Sánchez, which can be seen until May 9, vindicates painting above all else and that is why its gallery



VILLA MAGDALENA

owners encourage collectors and visitors to pay attention to his very personal way of using colors, working with oil and converse with tradition, “since he does not hesitate to use old formulas and recipes from the best artistic treatises of the Spanish Baroque, such as Pacheco’s, to guide his brushes”.



At the bottom right ‘Pious Lies’, the title of this exhibition. JUAN CARLOS MUÑOZ

In “Pious Lies”, as it is a gathering of works from different years, you can see the evolution and changes of register but there is one creation that stands out above the rest: the eight canvases that form the altarpiece with which the exhibition concludes, where the lives of saints coexist with coven and witches that seem to have arisen from the imagination of Francisco de Goya. The gestures, the way of placing the material, surprise as much as the coexistence of religious motifs with recurring elements such as skulls, bones, rats, crows or owls.

Criticism is already present in the first works of the exhibition and, although the artist does not want to give clues or guide the interpretation that the visitor can make of them, there is a clear allusion to the failure of the Welfare State and the social deficiencies in a society increasingly consumerist and obsessed with adorning itself with Michelin stars while inequality grows. Food is very present in several works at the beginning of the tour where the popular and the humble are vindicated, resorting to irony and introducing an imaginary dotted with mortadella sandwiches, carrots, fried eggs or sausages.

These paintings incite us to think about the great Spanish pictorial tradition and the tones of naturalism, from the Sevillian Velázquez of “La Vieja Frying Eggs” to the violent chiaroscuro of artists influenced by Caravaggio such as José de Ribera. Earths, ocher and oxides predominate in a palette that looks to tradition while remaining intensely current when it is illuminated by yellow strokes or a resounding orange. “Matías Sánchez is a romantic, he

buys raw linen, gives it several coats of glue, creates his own primer with old recipes because he doesn’t like to use industrial procedures or paints, he doesn’t even use blotters for oil ... There is a lot of work behind each one of these paintings, a lot of cooking “, Seleka admires.

Sánchez uses the codes of religious painting and vanitas to propose his own look at the theme of death where gravity is combined with irony, the contemporary with the anachronistic. This is especially evident in the diptych entitled “Catacombs of Paris”, where graffiti dialogues with abstract painting in an interesting train crash between black and white, and in the large-format work that gives the show its title, a meditation on art where, as in a glory break, the artist concentrates the most personal motifs of his never precious pictorial creed. “Painting above all else and painting for painters”, Seleka emphasizes before these canvases, proud of favoring the return to Seville “of one of our best Andalusian artists”.

Since before the inauguration, Delimbo had a waiting list among their international clients for the “Pious Lies” catalog, something that is not surprising if one takes into account the intense activity that their Madrid space has - at Doctor Fourquet 30, the main street of galleries, next to the Reina Sofía-, today the figurehead of its global projection and where Sánchez had already exhibited, given that the Sevillian market is still very fragile.



Close-up of Matías Sánchez (Tübingen, 1972). / JUAN CARLOS MUÑOZ

“Setting foot in Madrid has been essential for us,” reflects Seleka. “In Seville, the wealthy collector has no interest in contemporary art and that is why it is so important that figures like Sergio Ramos have begun to collect current Andalusian art and bet on painters like Manolo León; their commitment is essential to make visible that the Seville creative scene is one of the most powerful and interesting in Spain despite all the shortcomings and lack of muscle that the market presents. “