



Montferri

The Lightness of the Days

Ramiro Fernandez Saus

Long and Ryle are proud to announce our forthcoming exhibition 'The Lightness of the Days' by Ramiro Fernandez Saus, the celebrated Catalan artist who has won the hearts of many British collectors. This is a long awaited exhibition as Ramiro's last solo show was held in London in 2017 with his exhibition 'Sweet Passions'. In the last two decades he has become one of the most well known Spanish artists of his generation. In 2005 he was given a retrospective at the Museum of Sabadell and his works are in the collections of the Reine Sofia in Madrid, and the Albertina Museum in Vienna. In 2019 Long and Ryle published 'Prospecting the Inner Isles', a book covering over 20 years of Ramiro's paintings, written by Andrew Lambirth. Since then Ramiro has published two further books of poetry illustrated with his black and white drawings.



My Room by the Sea

Ramiro has always associated England with nature, and in his time as a young painter at Delfina Studios he would escape the city to explore the countryside. Over the years Long & Ryle introduced his work to friends and collectors who responded to the romance in his paintings. Works began to appear in collections throughout Britain; his paintings with their quiet reflective humour jostling alongside the Freuds and Hirsts of the British Art World. The many collectors who love his work in England include Hannah Rothschild, Victoria and Edward Bonham Carter, Helena Bonham Carter, and Kit Kemp.

This latest exhibition is a presentation of new paintings and Saus has explored a series of different themes for this show. Several large paintings are of interior scenes, where the room becomes a stage and imagined dramas unfold. *Room by the Sea* contrasts the room filled with references to the sea, a ship in a bottle, a painting of a buoy and a half written letter with the empty sea glimpsed through a

window and a spiritual light. Two birds have entered the stillness of the room. Animals are always present in Ramiro's work, representing the emotions and passions of human beings. At one point Ramiro had cats, dogs, birds and a pet monkey called Fabiola. His beloved terrier Nicanora was a muse to him. Now his two dogs Oscar and Bianca provide inspiration in his spectacular studio in Barcelona. The late artist Craigie Aitchison, famous for his Bedlington terriers shared Ramiro's love of animals and was an admirer and collector of his work.



Therese and the Moon

“The secret garden, the hidden room, the private life that really is private despite the glimpse of it we are privileged to be offered through the paintings - these are Ramiro's subjects. His approach is romantic and passionate, with an unfeigned directness, even though what he is painting is not an observational study of the world around him. He paints principally from the imagination, with a wonderfully extravagant spirit and remarkable precision. His simplicity of manner is coupled with a baroque delight in ornament and decoration.”



Flying in Vilarodona

Although others have decided that these are coded paintings, the truth of the matter is that Ramiro is an intensely formal painter, who considers matters of shape and colour, of line and light, above all else. Yes, he paints figurative pictures featuring recognisable people and animals in very human situations. But once again I must repeat: these paintings do not tell stories, and though they can be rich in personal reference and symbolism, this is not essential for the viewer to know. As Ramiro himself says: ‘My characters are poetic figures; they don’t have a logical explanation.’

“The casual observer might assume that there was something folksy about Ramiro’s work; far from it. This is not a sensibility derived from popular art forms such as painted inn signs or fairground decorations. It would be more accurate to adduce a kinship with 18th century French and Spanish painting, to look for comparisons among the achievements of the Rococo and Baroque. In fact Ramiro is a circus master of his fantasies, an adept of concealment and disguise, a skilful

manipulator. Not at all naïve, he is a deeply sophisticated artist who enjoins us to revel in his paintings and be happy, for through happiness do we understand the world better.”

- Andrew Lambirth 2009.

Ramiro has produced several self portraits over the years where he has painted himself in various guises; as the romantic poet/artist with a swan, a figure with a cat mask, and as a black man in a tropical setting. In this latest portrait he is the artist standing on a cloud represented as he works on the hot days of a Spanish summer wearing shorts and no shoes.



Self-Portrait

The period that Ramiro evokes is hard to pin down. His world is not constrained by a chronological time-line, but is rather a fusion of historical events and cultural customs intermingled with personal and collective memories. The anxieties of the present vanish and everything seems bathed in the spirit of romance. Poets and writers continue to influence and inspire Ramiro’s work. Scenes depicted have a heightened sense of reality and as we enter this playful dream world we have the sense of the house lights of the theatre being dimmed, as if we are watching a magical drama played out on the canvas before our eyes.

It seems very likely that the self-contained world that Ramiro paints has its origins in the fact that he has always lived in the same house, his parents' house, in Sabadell. By living in this one place all his life (a pattern of existence less than frequent in our restless and rootless society), he enjoys a profound sense of continuity and security, a place in which the imagination can be nurtured. He says: 'This is very important to me, as all my memories and references have to do with this house. Here is in fact where I have my tailor-made world.'



The exhibition will feature a new limited edition sculpture on the theme of ‘The Gold of the Tiger’, as pictured below. As well as a new limited edition print, produced with the Barcelona studio of Juan Roma.



The subject for Ramiro’s bronze sculptures almost always come from a painting and as such, he observes it would be ‘unthinkable to make them with no colour’. He adds that the process of painting pictures ‘is much more complex because I have to bear in mind composition, light, matching of colours...and represent everything in abstract space. The approach to a sculpture is more simple. It take volume, scale and expression.’ These three-dimensional realisations of Ramiro’s paintings have a distinct charm of their own, and a sometime more disconcerting presence.





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