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7 May 2024



Theresa and the Moon, 2023, by Ramiro Fernández Saus

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Helena Bonham Carter invests in a rising Catalan artist

The thick impasto figurative technique of Catalan artist Ramiro Fernández Saus (b. 1961), whose latest exhibition has just opened at the Long and Ryle gallery just around the corner from Tate Britain, puts me in mind of the mid-20th-century East Anglian painter Cedric Morris, whose flower paintings make six-figure prices at auction. But, unlike Morris, Saus's more playful paintings of animals and boats and cyclists in the clouds seem to have slipped beneath the art market's radar.

While he boasts an impressive list of collector enthusiasts including the author and former chairman of trustees at the National Gallery, Hannah Rothschild, actress Helena Bonham Carter and interior designer Kit Kemp, sales of his work have never hit the headlines. At auction, the best was in 2018 when a large painting of boatside swimmers estimated at £600 sold for £8,000. But that is still way below what they sell for in the gallery – and they do sell. At the London Art Fair in January, Long and Ryle sold all three of his paintings available for between £10,000 and £35,000. At the current exhibition, where 21 paintings are priced from £9,000 to £35,000, nearly half were sold in the opening week and Bonham Carter was among the buyers.
