ALMINE RECH

# In the Troubled Air...

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“What is the origin of the sense of disproportion that we sometimes feel in certain extraordinary moments, in front of certain overwhelming gestures, or fascinating images, or when listening to heartbreaking songs? Doesn’t the disproportion appear from a sovereign -if not subterranean- power? And if this power exists, should it not be called 'duende', as it is by the Andalusian artists and amateurs of cante jondo? And in order for a depth to be expressed, embodied, and returned to us, do we not need a duende to appear, like a psychic earthquake or a musical eruption of intensity?”, asks philosopher and art historian Georges Didi-Huberman in the essay that accompanies this exhibition project.

Federico García Lorca opened his *Romancero gitano*, published in 1928, with the *Romance de la luna, luna*, a poem constructed from a powerful central symbolic image that related the figure of a child and the presence of the moon over the space of the anvil of a forge. The first verse of the second stanza ✌ 'En el aire conmovido...'('In the Troubled Air...') ✌ combined two invisible elements ✌ one of them atmospheric (air) and the other psychic (emotion) ✌ in a powerful image that would find its echo, a few years later, in the content of the lecture *Theory and Play of the Duende* that the poet gave on 20 October 1933 at the Teatro Avenida in Buenos Aires. García Lorca would try to find in the elusive concept of the duende a key to deciphering the nature of commotion, understood as an event capable of affecting a community and an environment and not just an isolated psychological subject. In the context of cante jondo, the cantaor seems to connect with a deep and primitive force that runs through his body and that, exhaled in the form of a song, tears his voice, ripples the air, and emotionally transforms the receiver.

The *Romance de la luna, luna* and *Theory and Play of the Duende* are the Lorca texts that Didi-Huberman uses as a starting point in the exhibition 'In the Troubled Air...' to propose a complex political anthropology of emotion in a poetic key. The exhibition vindicates the utopian and emancipatory power of emotions, understood as a force capable of leading to a transformative collective commotion.

Works by Francisco de Goya, Pablo Picasso, Baruch Spinoza, Friedrich Nietzsche, Tatiana Trouvé, Víctor Erice, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Corinne Mercadier, Juli González, Alberto Giacometti, Harun Farocki, Henric Michaux and Unica Zürn, among many others, are arranged in the form of constellations of meaning within an ambitious process of dialectical assembly that gives the exhibition a spirit of rehearsal understood as a space for productive play.

Curator: Georges Didi-Huberman