

Las flores salvajes

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The CAC Málaga presents *Las flores salvajes* [Wild flowers], an exhibition by Madrid artist Jorge Galindo, one of the leading exponents of contemporary painting in Spain, whose practice has been a field of experimental expression since the beginning of his career. The exhibition brings together a selection of twenty-four large-format paintings with the theme of flowers as their common source of inspiration. Some of these works, produced over the last four years, have never been on display before. The show also includes one of the first paintings of the series, dating from 2009.

Passionately devoted to the medium of painting, Jorge Galindo is one of the most outstanding and original Spanish artists of his generation, whose production has had an impact on the international scene. He began exhibiting his work at the end of the 1980s, when he was associated with the Workshops of Current Art at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid. His initial creations focused more on material and tactile aspects than on pictorial grammar, using tarpaulin, hessian and other waste fabrics and even employing a variety of found materials in place of conventional canvas supports. Iconographic and visual references subsequently made an appearance in his works, through collage and photomontage – two distinctive techniques of his visual language – and the incorporation into the pictorial space of prints taken from calendars, advertising magazines and film journals.

An heir to the Spanish pictorial tradition, Galindo has established a dramatic relationship with painting. There is something tragic beneath the apparent joy of his colours and his expansive gestures. As Bernardo de Pinto de Almeida points out in the exhibition catalogue, his production can be characterised as a brand of experimental, post-pictorial painting that is free from preceding formal and conceptual limitations. Galindo's work has the ability to absorb and integrate different sources of popular culture, revealing a new understanding of the very act of painting which allows it to freely develop and constantly reinvent itself. In his latest paintings he continues to use collage – a method he has employed since the beginning of his career – in compositions which resort to the chaotic juxtaposition of strips of old wallpaper and odds and ends of found material from which, however, patterns emerge. His painting is born of gesture, of rapid execution: it is an intensely physical art that transcends all norms, developed using his very own methods and processes. Galindo's monumental paintings require a strenuous, active relationship – almost performative in nature – between the canvas and the artist's own body.

Las flores salvajes continues to explore the historically popular theme of floral motifs, renewed by Jorge Galindo's exuberant and sensual vision of the classic still life, executed on a monumental scale. Flowers make us think of beauty, joy, desire or mourning and bind us to our habitat. The artist's interest in depictions of flowers began in 2009, encompassing various media in his artistic practice, and even led to a series of works produced in collaboration with film director Pedro Almodóvar in 2019. Galindo's paintings are colourful, gestural, expressionistic and sometimes bordering on abstraction: energetic but balanced compositions, in which flowers emerge amidst footprints, splashes of paint and vehement strokes. In some of these compositions, the artist continues to experiment with the pictorial space by adding strips of wallpaper adorned with floral-pattern designs and ornamental motifs, which become decorative borders that serve as a frame for the flowers done in oil paint. The designs featured on the patterned wallpaper – which usually comes from second-hand stores, street markets and antique shops – is in contrast with the quick and loose gestural brushwork of the artist's hand. In other works, oil is applied over digital prints made on canvas. These pieces, destined for contemplation, allow for a multiplicity of different readings. For Jorge Galindo, who has adhered to his own narrative for more than three decades, painting flowers has to do with the celebration of life, the sheer pleasure of painting, defended as a means of expression and creative freedom.