

Revolutionarily Expressive

Antonio Saura (1930-1998), a leading 20th-century artist, was one of the most influential champions of Spanish painting in his epoch. His work is represented internationally in all major collections of modern art. Together with the Fondation archives antonio saura in Geneva, the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Museum Wiesbaden have organized a comprehensive retrospective illustrating the scope and complexity of Saura's art with some 200 works.

The Kunstmuseum Bern has already presented the art of the greatest Spanish painter Pablo Picasso in three landmark exhibitions. Now it is continuing a focus on Spanish painting with a comprehensive retrospective of Antonio Saura's figurative and expressive art. Saura explored the key subjects of painting and reformulated them in a highly revolutionary way. The exhibition covers all the phases of the artist's creative development, showing his large-format works and series of paintings, as well as addressing facets of his illustrative and graphic oeuvre. The retrospective will additionally present his iron sculptures to the public for the very first time.

From surrealism to expressive and gestural art

Antonio Saura was born in Huesca in 1930. He contracted tuberculosis as a child in Madrid and was confined to bed for five years, which led to him to begin painting and writing in 1947. Yves Tanguy and Joan Miró were the first artists to influence his work. He developed a personal style early in numerous pieces with a surrealist "oneiric quality." Between 1952 and 1955 he stayed for periods in Paris, and, in 1967, moved to the city to live there. From 1956, after breaking with surrealism, he started painting in an expressive and gestural style with his series *Women* and *Self-portraits*. In 1957 Saura was co-founder of the artists' group El Paso in Madrid and its head until it broke up in 1960. Around the same time, he painted his first *Crucifixions*, inspired by Diego Velázquez' painting *The Crucified Christ* hanging in the Prado in Madrid. After 1959, he concentrated on painting large-format series of panels engaging with subject matter such as *Shrouds*, *Portraits*, *Nudes*, *Crowds*, themes he took up again and again in his later work. And subsequently he executed the *Imaginary Portraits* and *Vertical Women* series.

Sculptures, the move to Paris, and work as a writer

In 1960 Saura investigated the medium of sculpture. He welded together assorted metal segments to create human heads, whole figures, or *Crucifixions*. After moving to Paris, Saura was politically active in opposing the Franco regime and participated in many discussions and disputes about political, aesthetic, and art issues. He now tackled a greater diversity of subject matter and expanded his pictorial invention. The series *Goyas Hund (Goya's Dog)* and the portraits of *Dora Maar*, which Saura painted from 1983 onwards, reveal his fascination for pivotal works of Goya and Picasso. In 1971 he gave up painting on canvas for a period and concentrated more on writing as well as drawing and painting on paper. He developed his individual creative literary oeuvre and published his writings from 1977 onwards. He also was responsible for a number of theater, ballet, and opera production sets, not to forget his illustrations for literary works. From 1983 until his premature death, Saura created an extensive artistic legacy by returning to his former subject matter and figures.

Comprehensive overview of Antonio Saura's work

The exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Bern will be subsequently shown at the Museum Wiesbaden. It is an ambitious project, being the first major retrospective of Antonio Saura's work to be organized since Ad Petersen devoted an exhibition to the artist in 1979 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. An extensive catalogue of the artist's work has been published in conjunction with the retrospective, as well as the edition *Antonio Saura, Por sí mismo (Antonio Saura. Über sich selbst)* containing essays by Saura about his work in German translation.

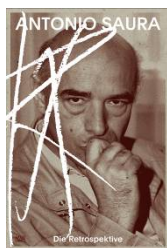
Contact person: Brigit Bucher, brigit.bucher@kunstmuseumbern.ch, tel.: 031 328 09 21

Images: Marie Louise Suter, press@kunstmuseumbern.ch, tel.: +41 31 328 09 53

The Exhibition

Opening: Thursday, July 5, 18:30
Duration: July 6 – Nov. 11, 2012
Project organizers: Dr Matthias Frehner, director, Kunstmuseum Bern
 Alexander Klar, director, Museum Wiesbaden
Curators: Cäsar Menz, honorary director, Musées d'art et d'histoire Geneva
 Olivier Weber-Caflisch, president, Fondation *archives antonio saura*
Admission fee: CHF 18.00 / reduced CHF 14.00
Further venue of the exhibition: MUSEUM WIESBADEN Nov. 30, 2012 – March 17, 2013

Exhibition catalogue



Antonio Saura. Die Retrospektive. Hrsg. Kunstmuseum Bern, Museum Wiesbaden, Fondation *archives antonio saura*. Texte von Bernard Dieterle, Matthias Frehner, Natalia Granero, Alexander Klar, Cäsar Menz, Marina Saura, Didier Semin, Olivier Weber-Caflisch. Gestaltung Régis Tosetti mit Simon Palmieri. Deutsch, 2012, 300 Seiten, ca. 264 farbige Abbildungen. Hatje Cantz. ISBN 978-3-7757-3369-4

Poster



F4
89.5 x
128 cm
CHF 20.00

The Publications

Antonio Saura: Über sich selbst. Hrsg. Kunstmuseum Bern, Museum Wiesbaden, Fondation *archives antonio saura*. Deutsch. ca. 432 Seiten, ca. 580 Abbildungen. Hatje Cantz. ISBN 978-3-7757-3410-3

Bert Papenfuß/Antonio Saura: Die Mauer. Hrsg. Fondation *archives antonio saura*, Gestaltung von Ralph Gabriel. ca. 192 Seiten, ca. 74 Abbildungen. Hatje Cantz. ISBN 978-3-7757-3409-7

Accompanying program (in German)

Öffentliche Führungen: Sonntag, 11h: 8./22. Juli, 12. August, 9./30. September, 14./28. Oktober, 11. November und Dienstag, 19h: 10./17./31. Juli, 21. August, 4./18., September, 9./30. Oktober **Visite commentée en français:** Mardi, 24 juillet, 19h30 et dimanche, 11 novembre, 11h30 **Visite commentée en français avec le commissaire Olivier Weber-Caflisch:** Mardi, 9 octobre, 19h30 **Kunst und Religion im Dialog:** Sonntag, 2. September, 15h30. **Kinderworkshop:** Sonntagmorgen im Museum: Sonntag, 9. September, 10h30. vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch, T 031 328 09 11, CHF 10.00 **Michaela Wendt liest Texte von Saura in der Ausstellung:** Sonntag, 13h: 9. September, 14. Oktober und Dienstag, 18h: 31. Juli, 21. August, 18. September **Museumüntsch: Worte und Bilder:** Sonntag, 21. Oktober, 10h – 17h: 11h Führung mit dem Kurator der Saura-Ausstellung Cäsar Menz. Eintritt frei **Filmreihe zur Ausstellung im Kino Kunstmuseum:** Mehr Informationen ab Mitte August unter www.kinokunstmuseum.ch

Patron of the exhibition is:

His Excellency, Mr. Miguel Angel de Frutos Gómez, Spanish ambassador to Switzerland

In collaboration with:

Alexander Klar, director, Museum Wiesbaden
 Fondation *archives antonio saura*, Olivier Weber-Caflisch, Geneva

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URSULA WIRZ-STIFTUNG

KUNSTMUSEUM BERN
 MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BERNE
 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8 – 12 CH-3000 BERN 7
 T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55
INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

MEDIEN-SERVICE
 SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE
 T +41 31 328 09 19/44
PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH