**Casa Asia and Casa Vicens organise a contemporary art exhibition on floral themes in the Orient and Occident**

· For the first time in Barcelona, the exhibition will bring together the work of 24 contemporary Spanish, Asian and Latin American artists, in their conversations with the orientalism of modernism through floral forms

· The floral theme is the link that unites the works of all those participating in the project with different techniques: drawing, painting, photography, video and installation

· The exhibition can be seen at Casa Vicens from April 26 to January 7, 2024

CASA VICENS GAUDí – 25 APRIL 2023

Casa Asia and Casa Vicens present the exhibition project ***After the fog, the first flowers****. Orient and orientalisms from modernism to modernity*. This exhibition brings together the work of 24 contemporary Spanish, Latin American and Asian artists who offer their personal creations in an interpretation of floral representation.

The exhibition can be seen from April 26 to January 7, 2024, at Casa Vicens, Antoni Gaudí’s first house where from its conception, the architect established a constant dialogue with the garden that surrounds the house, where a nature-themed ornamental model can be seen in all its rooms.

This is a unique exhibition that, **for the first time in Barcelona, will bring together 24 contemporary artists who share a common link, the floral theme**. Each one of them will form their own creative discourse through different formats and techniques, such as drawing, painting, photography, video and installation. This exhibition project relates the orientalism of modernism and the globalisation of art today.

Of the 24 artists participating in the exhibition, 11 are Spanish: Antoni Muntadas (installation), Javier Garcerá (painting), Pablo Marchante (painting), Teresa Esteban (painting), Joan Fontcuberta (photography), Nicolás Combarro (photography), Linarejos Moreno (photography), Paula Anta (photography), Manuel V. Alonso (drawing), Marina Nuñez (video), and Marisa González (video-installation). The North American Ana Nance (photography) and the Frenchman Jean Marie del Moral (photograph) have Spanish nationality.

Nine are Asian: the Japanese Mari Ito (pictorial installation), Takashi Murakami (painting), Yasumasa Morimura (photography), Nobuyoshi Araki (photography) and Azuma Makoto (video). The Koreans Han Sungpil (video) and Lee Lee Nam (video), the Chinese Luo Min (painting) and the Filipino Wawi Navarroza (photography). Two Latin American artists complete the exhibition: the Colombian Alberto Baraya (installation) and the Peruvian Cecilia Paredes (photography).

The curator of the exhibition, Menene Gras Balaguer, defines the exhibition project as “a sharing of the representation of floral forms related to all the contemporary productions that have been grouped together, arousing particular interest in the validity of floral representation in contemporary art; and, on the other hand, from the perspective of the floral theme that these artists share, to suggest connections that can be developed between the works shown, the history that precedes them and the links that demonstrate their appeal as manifestations valued by artistic historiography and contemporary criticism”.

**Floral art in Orient and Occident civilisations**

Floral art has had a constant presence in the history of art. From paintings in ancient Greece to the present day, flowers and plants have been a source of inspiration for artists from all eras.

In Ancient Greece they were seen as an important part of daily life and religion, and during the Renaissance they were a symbol of beauty and natural perfection. In the 17th century, floral art became a popular genre in Europe, and it took on a primary role during the Baroque period in particular, which was also the case with floral painting from the Spanish Golden Age and Flemish painting from the Netherlands until the 18th century. During the 19th century, floral art underwent a revolution with the impressionist movement. The artists of this movement began to use flowers and plants as decorative elements in their landscapes. In Asia, the culture of nature, especially in China, Japan and Korea, and the presence of plant forms, flowers and plants, also dates back to antiquity, especially in ornamental painting and later in classical landscape painting in China and Japan. Today, floral art continues to evolve and adapt to cultural and social changes, and continues to be a source of inspiration and creativity for artists around the world.

“From the beginning, the exhibition has been thought of as a means to show the interest of floral art in the civilisations of the Orient and Occident, starting from the unlimited dialogue between the creations presented by contemporary artists. Their proposals offer a way to build bridges between East and West, and a means to avoid resorting to stereotypes that have contributed negatively to the construction of the East from a colonial perspective. The floral theme is not a pretext, but the centre of this project, in which the images produced by its authors converge, thinking about the worship of nature that literature has facilitated and absorbed historically since antiquity”, says the curator Menene Gras.

The title that gives the exhibition its name has been inspired by two verses taken from Matsuo Basho’s haikus and the subtitle aims to “contextualise the works that are presented and the place where this happens. Precisely, *Orient and orientalisms from modernism to modernity* makes visible the idea that ‘modernity always remains unfinished, whatever the historical stage from which it arises, identifying itself with each change of era’. At the same time, it makes clear how orientalism continues during Catalan modernism and European art nouveau in all artistic disciplines.

Those who come to see the exhibition at Casa Vicens will be able to enjoy a unique dialogue around the floral theme, within the framework of a building that has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, that of Casa Vicens, with works by important figures from the national and international art scene.

**About Casa Asia**

Casa Asia is a public consortium made up of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, the Generalitat Government of Catalonia, the Barcelona City Council and the Madrid City Council, with the aim of contributing to improved knowledge and promoting relations between the societies of Asia and the Pacific and Spain, in the institutional, economic, cultural, and educational fields, as well as bringing closer and facilitating the exchange of cultures and projects of common interest. The institution, created in 2001, over the years has become the main public diplomacy body in Spain in the Asia-Pacific region and a meeting point for all those figures interested in one of the most dynamic areas of the world. Casa Asia is headquartered in Barcelona and has a centre in Madrid.

**About Casa Vicens**

Casa Vicens is Antoni Gaudí’s first house, built between 1883 and 1885. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2005, it is his manifest house, where a young Gaudí, barely thirty years old at the time, laid the foundations of what would be his later architecture. Located in the Gràcia neighbourhood of Barcelona, it opened its doors to the public in November 2017, after three years of restoration and rehabilitation that allowed the house to return to its origins. The outstanding rehabilitation carried out by Martínez Lapeña-Torres Arquitectos and DAW Office, has received various accolades and was a finalist in various architecture awards around the world (FAD Architecture Award Finalist 2018, Rehabilitation Prize at the Lledó Architecture Awards 2018, prize winner in the XIV Spanish Biennial of Architecture and Urban Planning 2016-2017, a candidate for the EU Mies Award 2019 and a finalist in the XI BIAU Awards 2019). Casa Vicens has the Biosphere certification for its commitment to sustainable tourism, the Safe Tourism Certified seal awarded by the Institute for Spanish Tourist Quality, and the Safe Travels seal supported by the World Travel and Tourism Council. These certifications recognise the full and correct application of the hygiene and health measures established to deal with COVID-19.

**More information:**

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