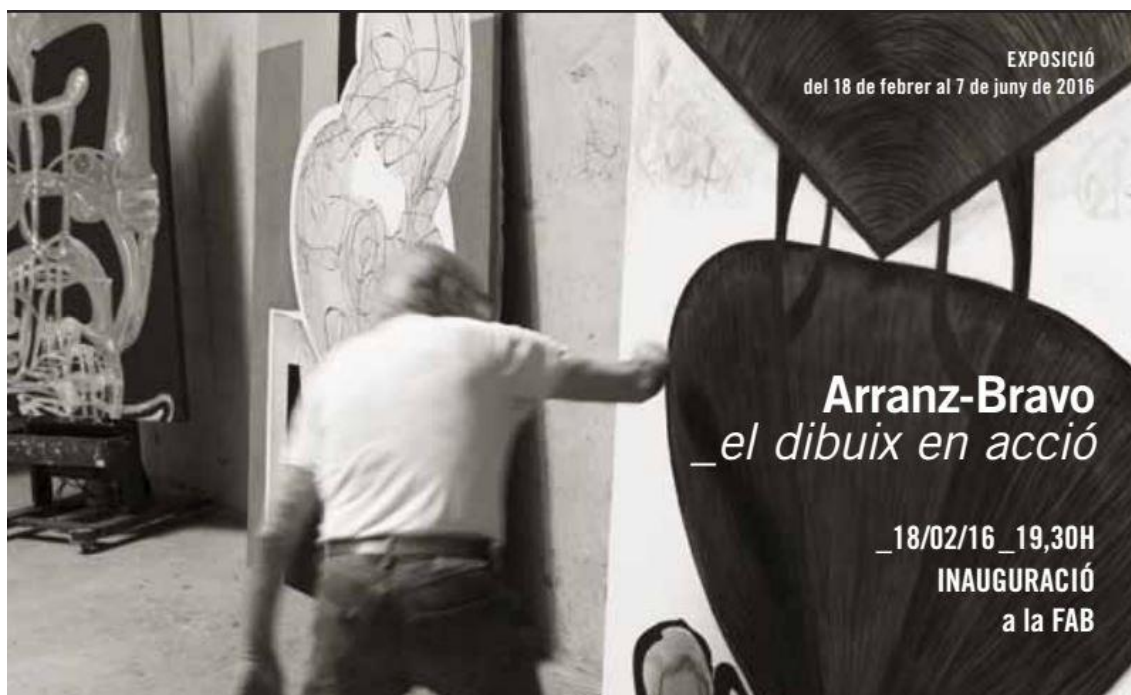


Arranz-Bravo. After drawing.



If there is an autonomous discipline that has survived post-modern iconoclasm, it is drawing. Along the way, other historic arts have become displaced, but drawing, *disegno*, continues to be a valid, rigorous practice. This affirmation is also applicable to the art of Eduard Arranz-Bravo. **The artist has gone through different artistic stages and attitudes: from the poetic art of the early-sixties to the more experimental and engaged work of the seventies and his present symbolic-monumental period.** And, throughout all these stages, drawing has remained his most beloved and loyal resource. Drawing continues to be “art’s springboard”, the private laboratory of utopian experimentation that is essential to achieving, ultimately, the great artistic metaphor.

The exhibition *Arranz-Bravo. Drawing in Action* reviews the uses, techniques and procedures used by this artist since the beginning of his career through **a selection of pieces from the Arranz-Bravo Foundation holdings, drawings from the collections of the Museum of L’Hospitalet**, portfolios of previously unseen works on paper from the **Monteiro Soares** collection in Brazil and, finally, contemporary works on paper made by Arranz-Bravo for the occasion. **A full symphony of productions on paper that aims to position Arranz-Bravo in the place that, in the view of many art critics and historians, he deserves as one of the greatest living draftsmen on the contemporary Catalan art scene.**

That Eduard Arranz-Bravo is a virtuoso of drawing is something that represents neither a merit nor an advantage at this point in art history. Rather, it is a hindrance, one that the artist tries to negate with each stroke. During his school and university training, he amply demonstrated his ability to grasp and imitate the reality that surrounded him, but even his early works show the need to refute this gift. Rather, his most intimate creations embody drawing *after* drawing: an attempt to return to the naïve, innocent gesture of the child who, at the age of just 10 years, was able to draw the first work chronologically conserved in the Foundation collection: *Tatano*. That the art of drawing played a prominent role in his early work is demonstrated by the cover of the first catalogue ever devoted to Arranz-Bravo, written by Baltasar Porcel in 1966, and the fact that he received the Ynglada- Guillot Prize for Drawing in 1968 with a work now conserved at MNAC. Later came the fecund period of experimentation in the latesixties: this was the time of the Tipel factory, the Sala Gaspar gallery, the work in tandem with Bartolozzi, the happenings, Ibiza, and the parades of confusion in Granollers. But the 1968 portfolios, discovered in the Monteiro Soares collection in Brazil, some 130 works on paper that include drawings, watercolours and etchings, show that Arranz-Bravo’s artistic subversion was born from his day-to-day work and introspection in the studio. In these pieces, we perceive the artist’s obsession with the human figure and his quest to take into unexplored territory the early biomorphic experiments of Pablo Picasso and the sharp, dreamlike fabulations of Joan Miró. And, of course, drawing in action. We already know that, for Arranz-Bravo, art is a “gymnastic” discipline. But he has also practiced the technique in nomadic fashion, especially during his more frenetically experimental years. In the exhibition, this is demonstrated by two projects: the *Tauromachy* sketches (with Rafael Bartolozzi, based on following the bullfighter Antonio Ordóñez around bullrings

all over Spain, the results from which were shown at the Spanish Institute in New York); and *Zahara- 22*, with Xavier Guardans, featuring Works produced on a visit to Zahara de la Sierra.

Arranz-Bravo. *Drawing in Action* is one of the most complex exhibitions that we have organised since the Foundation was first established in 2009, because it is the one that has involved the most synergies and collaborations. First and foremost, we should like to give special mention and thanks to the Monteiro Soares family for their philanthropic generosity in framing and lending the 130 works on paper featured in the exhibition, and publishing these in a special edition of a separate catalogue. Secondly, thanks to the Museum of L'Hospitalet and its director, Josep Maria Solias, for providing us with the embryonic drawings for the sculptures *The Welcomer* and *Liberty Bridge*, thereby completing our narrative of that lovely story of enthusiasm and collaborative work between the city and the artist. And, finally, as always, our gratitude goes out to L'Hospitalet City Council, the Government of Catalonia and all the Arranz-Bravo collectors who support the Foundation year after year, precisely so that we can organise exhibitions of the scope and quality embodied in the show we now present. To one and all, our heartfelt thanks.

Albert Mercadé

Artistic director of the Arranz-Bravo Foundation