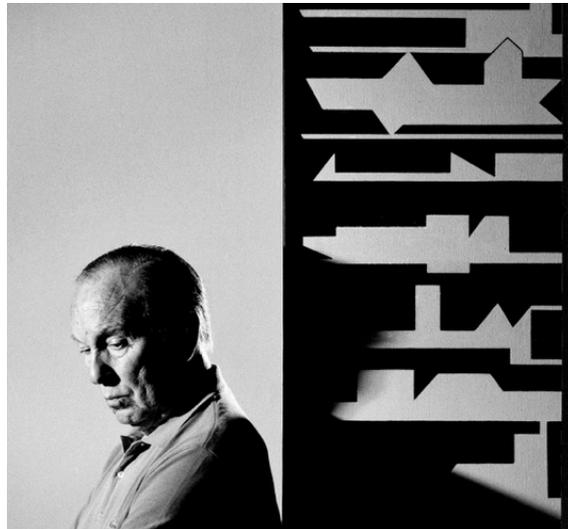


PABLO PALAZUELO

(Madrid, Spain, 1915 – 2007)

When I arrived in Paris (...) I was at that time very intrigued by abstraction, as I had been before by Cubism. At the same time I realised that those neo-Cubist still lifes were beginning to lose interest for me; so I began to simplify the composition of those still lifes and to remove elements that made up a more or less figurative vision, paying much more attention to the form itself and not to what it represented.

Pablo Palazuelo studied architecture in Madrid and at the Royal Institute of British Architects in Oxford, where he graduated from the *Intermediate Exams* in 1936, specializing in mechanics and design. This academic experience in Oxford determined his entire artistic career. In 1939 Palazuelo decided to abandon architecture and



Pablo Palazuelo at Galapagar, Madrid, 1992 © Jean Marie del Moral

devote himself fully to painting. Later on in his life, however, there were regular crossovers with this discipline. His conviction in a necessary integration of the arts – which was influenced and motivated by the knowledge of the Art and Crafts movement in England-, laid the foundation for a constant exercise of transdisciplinary thinking.

Palazuelo became known as a painter in Madrid in the early 1940s. At that time he was part of the "moderately modern" movement of what was soon to become known as the Madrid School. In 1948 he arrived to Paris with a grant from the French government. In this city -where he stayed until 1963- he exhibited his first non-figurative drawings and began to practice abstract painting, devoid of naturalistic references.

Leaving behind the horror of the war in Spain, in Paris he established contact with outstanding artists from the concrete-geometric art scene, such as August Herbin and Ellsworth Kelly, and with the circle of artists from the Denise René Gallery. From this moment on, he explored the constructivist avant-garde and deeply researched into metaphysics, mathematics and alchemy. The convergence between mysticism and construction deeply marked his work since then.

On the other hand, the notion of rhythm was key for the painter; his conception of the work as a process is based on this element, on its capacity to transform and order space. In this way, the works take shape in their own internal development, in the organic growth of the formal structures that multiply, rhythmically, on the canvas. In 1954 Palazuelo made his first sculpture, but temporarily abandoned this medium which he took up again at the beginning of the sixties. His first individual exhibition in Paris took place at the Galerie Maeght in 1955. From then on, he continued exhibiting frequently in the main museums of Europe and the United States and

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realized exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Carnegie International in Pittsburgh and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville, in Paris. In the words of the critic Kevin Power, Pablo Palazuelo developed an abstract style with a geometric base that invites to think of his work as a speculative model of the universe.

His vision of nature interrupted the traditional view of the landscape and abandoned its horizontal or empirical conception in favour of a vertical, aerial and abstract one - based on number, line and energy-. This attitude guided his work from the second half of the fifties, when he formulated the constructive and aesthetic principle of "transgeometry". Transgeometry made geometry and emotion converge. Palazuelo made use of this notion to translate the rhythms of the material that shapes the universe.

In 1973 he exhibited for the first time in Spain. In 1977 he exhibited his sculptural work, first in Barcelona, at the Maeght Gallery, and later on, in December of the same year, at Galería Theo, Madrid. In 1987 he realized his first individual exhibition in Madrid. In November 1993 the Museo de Bellas Artes, in Bilbao, dedicated a solo exhibition to Pablo Palazuelo, which in early 1994 travelled to Zaragoza for an exhibition at the Banco Zaragozano. In the following years he exhibited frequently in Spain, in Galería Maeght and Galería Theo, while keeping alive his relationship with Paris. In 1981 a monograph on his work is presented, published by Maeght, in collaboration with Claude Esteban.

In 1996 he receives the CEOE Prize for the Arts. On December 10, 1999, he was awarded the National Prize for the Plastic Arts *Ex Aequo*, together with the sculptor Cristina Iglesias, by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture. In 2004 he was awarded with the Premio Velázquez de Artes Plásticas. In 1995 the Reina Sofía Museum dedicated a major retrospective exhibition to Pablo Palazuelo, followed by a second one in 2005; *Pablo Palazuelo: 1995-2005*. The latter reviewed the last ten years of his artistic production and thus completed the first retrospective.

In 2006, the MACBA Museum of Barcelona dedicated an extensive retrospective to Pablo Palazuelo, curated by Manuel Borja-Villel and Teresa Grandas, which went to the Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao. Pablo Palazuelo died in Madrid on 3 October 2007.



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