

Marlborough

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Juan Genovés: Recent Work

Marlborough Gallery

February 6-March 3, 2007

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce an important exhibition of new paintings by the renowned Spanish artist Juan Genovés. Born in Valencia in 1930, Genovés is one of Spain's best-known contemporary artists, and he is recognized for work with a style rooted in Social Realism and Pop with a distinctly critical voice that became a force for political change during the Franco regime in Spain. This will be Genovés' first show in New York since 1998.

This exhibition will feature over twenty paintings, acrylic on canvas on wood board, painted in 2005 and 2006. Committed to the avant-garde, Genovés' recent work has tended toward Informalism and expressionist figuration, where the tension between the plastic reality of the paintings and the subject mirror society's own duality. This is clearly viewed in the painting *Eclipse*, 2006 (55 1/8 x 70 7/8 in.), where the viewer reads the painting as an aerial view of a group of people surrounding a large oval pool that reflects the sky, seemingly the eponymous eclipse, while their long shadows extend on the canvas. The "people" themselves are no more than thickly applied paint and the shadows just thin strokes of black, yet the painting clearly alludes to figures in a society, perhaps uniting for a ritual inspired by the solar event, in which a palpable sense of urgency is transmitted through the subtly modulated impasto.

In the 1970s, Genovés began developing two subjects: the "alone individual" and the "multitude," working with flat inks and plastic structures with a distinct cinematic quality. *Eclipse* and many other works in the show, among them *Configuration*, 2006 (55 1/8 x 106 1/4 in.), *Platforms*, 2006 (70 4/5 x 86 2/3 in.) and *Journey's End*, 2005 (94 1/2 x 70 7/8 in.), each relate to Genovés' exploration of the multitude, where the collective body of humanity is pulled toward something greater than the individual, either into a black abyss, as in *Journey's End*, or into a tightly-knit circle as in *Platforms*, where the minute individuals are subsumed in a spiral maze. These paintings depict bird's-eye views of scenes where no buildings, roads, trees or seeming clues to a common landscape are visible, thus creating an intense dynamic of anxiety and dislocation. Genovés' dynamic use of line and perspective, aligned with an exacting eye for the modulation and use of color, is potently married to the artist's conviction that art should be socially engaged and emotionally, indeed, physically, engaging.

As the noted art historian Francisco Calvo Serraller noted recently: "All of Genovés is in the most recent Genovés, except the fact that the aestheticism of the image offers a more paradoxical moral fiber, because it dramatizes better the human lack of shelter, it intensifies the absurd, the disorientation; it makes frailty more palpable and urgent."

As a child in Valencia, Genovés experienced the Spanish Civil War in a traumatic way: bombardments, death squads, neighborhoods silenced with wounded and dead citizens. His family supported the leftist Republicans and thus suffered under the reigning Nationalist party, which enforced a ban of his native language, Catalan. At the age of 12 he assisted his father in the decoration of children's furniture, learning painting and glazing techniques, and at age 13, leaving school to help support his family, he studied drawing at night. After attending San Carlos Fine Arts School, he settled permanently in Madrid in 1958, exhibiting with frequency. Genovés joined Marlborough Gallery in 1966.

In 1972, Genovés helped to organize an exhibition in Milan to raise funds for the anti-Franco movement. In 1976, he was detained and held in solitary confinement for seven days for having made a poster demanding amnesty for political prisoners. A member of the Image Collective of the Spanish Communist Party during the 1970s, he played a role in the recovery of Spain's democracy and his work became a symbol of Catalanism. In the 1980s, Genovés left the activities of party politics and focused increasingly on artistic activities and peace efforts, while exhibiting continually both internationally and in Spain.

Genovés is the recipient of a number of important prizes, including the Mention of Honor at the XXXIII Venice Biennale, 1966; the Gold Medal at the VI Biennale Internazionale de San Marino, 1967; the Marzotto Internazionale Prize, 1968; the Premio Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Spain, 1984; and the Premio de las Artes Plásticas de la Generalitat Valenciana, Spain, 2002.

Genovés' work is found in many of the most important public collections in the United States and Europe, including The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France; The Museum of Modern Art and The Guggenheim Museum, both in New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Israel Museum, Jerusalem and IVAM, Valencia, Spain, among others.

An illustrated catalogue will be available during the exhibition.

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