

A complete and persuasive exhibition; that is what the Madrid artist Ramón Lapayese presents us these days in the "Syra" Gallery. In the paper that invites us to visit the exhibition there is an insert with a considerable writing by the excellent critic and delicate writer Manuel Sánchez Camargo, subdirector of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Madrid, who gives us an accurate panegyric on the doble personality of the artist. Double, we say, as it indeed is. Up until now we knew Ramón Lapayese to be a vigorous sculptor, to have an investigative spirit and a sensitive temperament. Today we know him also as a painter, and to be gifted, in this new phase of his artistic personality, with the same qualities he possesses in the other arts; although clearly we now see him working in another plane of speculation, as corresponds to the genre into which he pours his sensitivity.

In Ramón Lapayese's sculptures, his qualities live and are manifested through the tectonics of the material, which is carried to the highest level of violence with respect to the immediate details of reality, although this is only in an explicit figurative concept; always in demand of the maximum formal expression, in the game of mass, of volume and empty spaces, the one enclosing the other and together they form one block, in spite of their distinct natures. In his paintings, these qualities come to us driven by a total and absolute pictorial feeling, much less formal than luminous, although it is this as well as chromatic.

In his canvases –so accurately assembled in the arabesque of their forms, so playfully harmonized– there is no intention, nor a shadow of an attempt, to give us any feeling of volume, any mimetism supported in the vision of the object. Flat paintings, exempt from all allusion to relief or to the depth of that which is represented.

And with this, a depth of penetration into the very essence of the subject matter, not so much in its dramatic, sarcastic or, simply, pleasant and routine anecdote, as in the way in which he surrenders himself in his eloquent union of sketches and coloring.

In a few words, what in sculpture he offers as pure volume and mass, here is blotches of paint and pigmentation. In the one and the other, Ramón Lapayese is garrulous and extremely intense in his expression.

We were familiar with Ramón Lapayese the sculptor, who we have seen aroused in his searchings, at times totally disregarding any resorting to natural morphologies, and other times alluding to some previously used structures by means of more subtle allusions, but always sculpture, definitely sculpture. And as such we once again find him today, three years after his last display in this same hall, with his fantasy, his ease and his potential, working in wood and in the forging of iron with an irrefutable command of technique and with prolific and fruitful creative freedom. In his paintings, as if we were dealing with a total split into two different personalities, we also find a painter with an energetic temperament. He distorts anatomy, frustrates all confrontation, constructs unexpected entities, unusual, joyful harmonies, stark contrasts and a sort of characterization –more serious than comic, of course–, enclosing all in an impulsive and optimistic burst. But sculptor and painter coincide in this active and emphatic expressiveness and in the extremely strong spiritual tension that runs throughout all of his production.

*Juan Cortés, Diario La Vanguardia, Barcelona April 17, 1966*  
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