

Ramón Lapayese: the integrity of an artist

by SELA DEL POZO COLL

What an author once defined, many years ago, as "primitive expressionism" when referring to Ramon Lapayese's (Madrid, 1928) creations, seems to be more of an "advanced expressionism" in this new exhibit, which should almost be understood as a small retrospective. His art has evolved in its form and its content, establishing links to now old masters such as Kirchner or Millares but without losing a speck of the artistic personality that this devoted artist cultivated for years. On this occasion some of the works that resolve his artistic passions have been brought together. These works define, better than words ever could, the artistic and vital career of a man whose individuality was the defining identity of his plastic artwork.

Painting and sculpture go hand in hand in this show that is quite appropriately entitled "Essence." The great themes of his life are grouped together to offer us an intelligent vision of this universal *madrileño* who lived his life between Europe and America. Music, bulls or his characters caught up in the routine of daily life reveal to us, through large brushstrokes, the processes of mental abstraction carried out during his fruitful creative fluctuations.

His palette, which is dry in his abstract paintings and vibrant with color in his figurative strokes, describes scenes that are heavy with material. Under the apparent simplicity of each of his oil paintings resides a spirit that nurtures itself on the popular aspects of life and that is tinged, in equal parts, with tacit irony and latent lyricism, briefly rediscovering similar but hidden worlds. For this reason Ramón Lapayese is only partly a primitive artist, for he knew how to condense and magnify in defining strokes those things that are so difficult to express, putting simplicity forth as a profound example of a vital spirit of his times.

His sculptures are centered on this concentration that I have described. As a global artist, his artistic activity requires the third dimension to poeticize concepts, to gather emotions together and transfer to bronze, iron or wood the essence conceived from his imaginary world.

I paint, above all, because of a spiritual necessity, Lapayese himself stated in an interview published in the *Diario de León* in 1983. It has been a long time since the capital of Madrid has paid a much deserved tribute to this great artist of the twentieth century.

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