

Manolo Gómez . Ya es hora - Now is the hour

*Freeing art from naturalistic forms
and bring it to life with its own dynamism
to make the viewer feel all the emotion of an idea
the whole emotion of an idea
that is the synthesis of my artistic aspiration.*

Helios Gómez in "Dias de Ira", Berlin, 1930

Ya es hora - Now is the hour is the title of the last, the 80th picture in the graphic series Los Caprichos - The Incursions by the Spanish artist Francisco de Goya. In this series, which is considered a masterpiece of art history, the painter Goya turned to printmaking for the first time. In aquatint etchings, some of which seem almost surrealistic, the artist, who had long been a recognised court painter in Spain, created a biting critical panopticon of Spanish society. Now, almost after eighty prints, the artist proclaims the hour of the now with this painting. Grotesque and dubious-looking monks jump startled out of their twilight state of lethargy. And one can understand the artist: It is the revolution of art, of the new age that is dawning - the age of the Enlightenment, which had long since brought about the end of the French monarchy in neighbouring France. Goya, the court painter of the Spanish aristocracy, does not openly proclaim the revolution, of course, but in his painting, in his own ambiguous manner, he shows a group of monks who, for him, symbolised the torpor of society.

In Goya's time, flamenco as we know it did not yet exist. Nevertheless, the artist, who was so close to the court, moved in the environment in which flamenco was to develop in the following decades as a resistant culture of the people and the Gitanos. Dances that seem like precursors of flamenco, musicians and the notorious Mayas, who were often Romnja, are frequent subjects of Goya's painting, who unfortunately had already lost his hearing by this time and had to live in the eternal loneliness of deafness.

And so Ya es Hora is a call that seems to have sprung from flamenco culture. Now is the hour! The grito, the cry, of the cante of flamenco. The moment becomes a resistive momentum in this culture, and thus we find ourselves in the midst of the art of Barcelona-based Andalusian artist Manolo Gómez. Gómez is actually an abstract painter whose artistic roots can be found in the art of ceramics and precisely in flamenco culture. In his abstract painting, he has found a congenial translation of the flamenco of the Gitanos into a pictorial language of forms and has made it famous in numerous exhibitions in Spain and Europe. Like Goya with his Caprichos, Manolo Gómez, in his homage to Francisco de Goya and above all to the Sevillian Gitano and avant-garde artist Helios Gómez (*1905 Seville - d. 1956 Barcelona) - with whom, as far as we know, Manolo Gómez is not related - turns for the first time to prints with his exhibited series. Around the graphic of the same name by Francisco de Goya, the exhibition Ya es Hora thus presents 18 prints by Manolo Gómez, with which he has found a unique, fragile and sensitive, mostly black-and-white condensation of his art in recent months. Three-dimensional structures of the prints recall the beginning of his career as a ceramist. But Gómez presents a new artistic world, he offers us a world of freedom, of creative momentum, which, full of aesthetic richness, skilfully knows how to overcome all hurdles. Far away from ethnically determined attributions, from nationalisms, from war and its consequences. And so we want to pay homage to Helios Gómez with this exhibition. We remember this unique political artist who fought for a world different from the one he lived in, for a world in which everyone should participate. We remember him who subordinated his own art to the political cause, to the anti-fascist struggle. For Helios Gómez actually envisioned an art that

would convey an emotion to its audience with purely abstract forms, just as Manolo Gómez succeeds in doing today.
Moritz Pankok, 12.7.2022

This exhibition of etchings may come as a surprise, as I have created only a few black and white works in the more than 30 years I have been painting. Those familiar with my career know that colour, along with overlapping lines that are almost always in black, is the way I usually capture emotion on the canvas. I have never been drawn to drawing. However, I have long been fascinated by the technique of etching and the mystery that surrounds it, and I couldn't help but try it out now that I have the opportunity.

The works I am presenting for this exhibition are etchings because they were made by pressing the paper in a press. The use of a thermoplastic material for the plates has allowed me to preserve the imprint of the drawing stroke, but above all the work consisted in preparing the colours or inking of the plates to transfer the pictorial work onto the paper. The works produced in this way are in fact unique pieces and are not numbered.

Manolo Gómez Romero, Barcelona 2022

Venue: ERIAC European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture, Reinhardtstrasse 41 - 43, 10117 Berlin

Opening: 8 September 2022, 7pm

Duration of the exhibition: 9 September 2022 – 31 November 2022

Opening hours: Mon to Fri 10 - 17.00h Sat & Sun closed.

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