

GALERIA MARC DOMÈNECH

Ana Peters. The 1960s The Artistic Avant-garde and Social Realism (From 15 to 22 September 2022)



Corazones (Díptico), c.1966

Ana Peters: Female Archetypes of the Modern Woman

Ana Peters was born in Bremen in 1932, but when the Second World War broke out, her family moved to Valencia. She studied at the San Carlos School of Fine Arts and later at the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid, and in 1964 married the art critic and historian Tomàs Llorens. That same year saw the founding of the Valencian branch of Estampa Popular, which aimed to reach out with art to a wider audience by means of affordably priced prints whose contents condemned the Franco regime repression and social inequalities. The group members included, as well as Ana Peters, Rafael Solbes, Manolo Valdés, Joan Genovés, Joan Antoni Toledo and Cardells. Among Peter's works from this period are a number of screen prints depicting vulnerable groups in society such as the elderly, women and children. Peters attended Estampa Popular's preparatory meetings for its second exhibition and participated in the show. However, she was unable to present any work in its first exhibition, held in 1964, as she was pregnant and had to care for her children. As was true for many women painters at that time, the vicissitudes of her private and family life imposed various restrictions on her professional career as an artist. Also at that time, she produced a number of works by transposing images onto paper taken from fashion and current affairs magazines that showed modern women.

In 1966, Spain's political climate was under the sway of Franco's dictatorship, whose autarchic regime shifted dramatically with the introduction of the Stabilisation Plan of 1959, which paved the way for the liberalisation of foreign trade and opened up the country to foreign capital. As a result, Spanish society began to embrace the habits of international capitalism and entered into an era of consumerism and mass culture.

A year earlier, a new group had emerged that advocated critical realism committed to the historical and cultural times in Spain, a critique that could be expressed literally, ironically or metaphorically. The members of the *Crónica de la Realidad* (Chronicle of Reality) movement – the theory for which was provided by the critics Vicente Aguilera Cerni and Tomàs Llorens – were Joan Genovés, Joan Antoni Toledo, Rafael Solbes, Manolo Valdés and Ana Peters. They aimed to go beyond Art Informel, the predominant aesthetic movement at the time, and were also in keeping with French Narrative Figuration, which was also addressing everyday stereotypes and the violence of official institutions, as well as the iconography of advertising and of the mass media.



Untitled (screenprint)

In that year of 1966, Ana Peters showed a series of acrylic paintings on paper at the Galería Eburne in Madrid in an exhibition entitled *The Image of Women in Consumer Society*, works ignored for so many years that we can at last view again today. Even though she had already forgotten the label 'Pop Art', these pieces were undoubtedly



El carro de Venus, 1966

influenced by this movement but with one fundamental difference. The women in film and fashion magazines who represented the ideal of female beauty – blonde, shapely and sensual, in keeping with the look of Marilyn Monroe or Barbarella – were not extolled in these works as they were in Pop Art, where they had already been transformed into modern legends due to their pure indexicality. Rather, in Peters' works there is a relatively subtle critique of women in consumer society that comes out in the

counterbalancing with images of the war in Vietnam or figures from decks of cards in the French style, as if suggesting these beauties could also be used as betting stakes. Typical of the language of Pop Art was the use of the clear line, deriving from comics, and the repetition of images. It has been said that these works are the earliest examples of feminist painting in Spain (after the Spanish Civil War) and this may be so, although Peters balked at labels and excessively explicit declarations. What is evident is that due to their size and iconology, so typical of the problems of the 1960s, they are works of historical importance in Spanish art.

Victoria Combalía

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This project has been designed exclusively for the Barcelona Gallery Weekend and will only be open to the public from 15 to 22 September (throughout the day from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm).