

Galería Marta Cervera

Bob Smith

Días de plata y oro

Apertura Madrid Gallery Weekend

September 14th: 12 - 22 h

September 15th & 16th: 11 - 20 h

September 17th: 11 - 14 h

*Galería Marta Cervera has the honor to present *Días de plata y oro*, a solo exhibition by Bob Smith, featuring a selection of works from his stage in Madrid during the decade of 1970.*

The show will be on view from September 14 through October 28, 2023.

Bob Smith was born in Springfield, Mass. in 1944 and died of AIDS in Miami in 1990. A graduate in Graphics from the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, he was awarded a Charles H. Whitman traveling scholarship by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1969. He traveled to Europe, deciding to settle and work in Madrid after a one year stay in Morocco where he learned the craft of wood and silver inlay. Through his work and his very special talent to meet and engage friendships, he came in contact with many artists. In Madrid, his work was soon brought to public attention by Galería Vandrés, the most prominent avant-garde gallery in Spain during the seventies.

Between 1971 and 1977, he exhibited regularly in Spain, France, Germany, Italy and was included in the 1973 Biennale de Paris at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris and exhibited with the Rodolphe Stadler Gallery for which Antonio Saura wrote in his introduction to the catalogue :

Few are recent works which succeed, as much as those of Robert Smith, in fixing a personal universe. In the constant objectification of forms specific to contemporary art, the appearance of a work, of such an extreme subjectivity and so freely produced, constitutes an unusual and encouraging phenomenon. This work was conceived within the framework of certain premises of contemporary art - precisely those where expressiveness and the unfinished dominate, implying the liberation from traditional systems of iconography and composition. Difficult to fit in and very far from the periodicity of fashions, this work offers us an unprecedented iconographic system strongly sensitized by some of the key myths of our time.

In 1977, Francisco Rivas in his essay "Bob Smith: From This Side/The Other Side of Paradise" (Zoom Magazine, Madrid, January 1977) would focus on the freedom and poetic vocabulary of the artist in these words:

We find ourselves before an iconographic, poetic and delicate world, full of patches of sky, clouds, lace, pieces of grass or phallic herbs, of hair, lips, flowers, photos, exclamations and broken sentences. Even the most naturalistic drawings have a

C/ Valencia 28

28012 Madrid

tel. +34913105036

info@galeriamartacervera.com

www.galeriamartacervera.com

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strong symbolic meaning. Landscapes, buildings or objects become symbols, because not only does reality inform the work, but the id acts on it, selecting it. Drawing, painting, is thus a place of confluence between what is real and what is desired, between what is seen and what is dreamed.

In 1977, Bob Smith decided to return to the United States, and settled in New York City. The loft that he shared with video-artist Michel Auder (married to Viva, the Warhol star) at 228 West Broadway was already an acknowledged outpost for the European expatriates as he took it over from Miralda and Muntadas, two artists friends from Spain. He became friends with many artists and poets of the avant-garde and collaborated on several projects with some of them, in particular with choreographer and dancer Blondell Cummings for whom he did the stage design and costumes of her piece "Basic Strategies No. V." at the Adams Memorial Theatre in Williamstown, Mass.

At the Artist Space Anniversary Show, New York, 1984, he would describe his life and work with these few lines...

My work uses the past and present, the esoteric and the commonplace, social and political messages along with religious icons and personal journeys. Travel has always been an important resource in my work – using another culture's myths and treasures along with my personal experiences of the moment, expressing my identification with the collective, as well as my isolation, to tell a visual story of facts, dream states, old proverbs and archetypes.

Our exhibition presents works realized during the period that Bob Smith lived and worked in Madrid: drawings, prints, objects, paintings that crystalize personal experiences and emotions, inspired in his travels through Europe and the Middle East.

Robert B. Smith (Springfield MA, 1944 - Miami FL, 1990). A graduate in Graphics from the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, he was awarded the Charles H. Whitman traveling scholarship in 1969. After traveling through Europe, and a one year stay in Morocco where he learned the craft of wood and silver inlay, he decided to settle in Madrid, befriending artists such as Antonio Saura. His work gained recognition at the renowned avant-garde Galería Vandrés. During the seventies, he exhibited regularly in Spain, France, Germany, Italy and was included in the 1973 Biennale de Paris at the Musée d'Art Moderne. In 1977, he returned to the US and settled in New York. His work was exhibited at Terne Gallery, Schreiber/Cutler Gallery, Yvonne Seguy Gallery, Nolo Contendere Gallery, and K & E Gallery, among others. He received numerous awards, including The Pollock-Krasner Foundation Fellowship. In 2022, a large retrospective exhibition took place at Martos Gallery, New York.

C/ Valencia 28
28012 Madrid
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