

## 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

### Antoni Clavé

*Alchimia della materia*

**Scoletta dell'Arte dei Tiraoro e Battioro**

Campo San Stae 1980, 30135, Venezia

**6 May – 31 October 31 2015**

**opening 5 May - invite only**

*Antoni Clavé (Barcelona 1913 – Saint Tropez 2005) is the fascinating artist under the spotlights of the 56th International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia, as he is the protagonist of a large retrospective organized by Galleria d'Arte Maggiore of Bologna at the magnificent Scoletta dell'Arte dei Tiraoro e Battioro in Venezia. Clavé, a major exponent of the XX century art, with his unique personality, has been proven capable of unexpected détournements of deep and staggering complexity: his inquiring spirit longs for experimentation. The exhibition wants to underline the never ending challenge to traditional artistic processes that Antoni Clavé engaged thorough his career, thorough his artworks.*

Only few XX century artists succeeded both in achieving intellectual consistency and braving new artistic fields: Antoni Clavé was one of the happy few. The coherence of his production, strengthened by its complexity, has the leading role in the exhibition held at the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale. Opened by the great bronze sculpture, “Guerrier et bouclier”, inside the Scoletta dei Battioro the oil paintings in homage to Greco will be on display together with the mixed technique experimentations with aluminium foil and collages of the '70s, and with the stately paintings of the '90s. If the bronze sculpture represents a human figure – a warrior, the last descendent of an ancient culture, full of mystery, yet filled with humour – Clavé, on the selected '70s artworks, has left the impressions of everyday objects on aluminium foil, transforming the absence into presence.

Going on, next are the majestic homages to the great master Greco, repeated in always different nuances, like it was a subtle leitmotiv permeating his artistic production. An endless reformulation of his own influences: this is the urge Clavé is answering to. He is brave enough to follow the same path of the Masters, as he is himself a Master.

In the most recent works – the stately oil paintings – the figuration is melt in a gestural pictorial quality, which is never fully lost: here collages are integrated and interact with various expressive techniques. Every decade is the field of new, innovative experiments, in which every techniques is acquired by the artist as a way to investigate and convey the world.

*Vu à Vicky Street*, with its unique red – a trademark colour for this artist – presents a still, calm gesture, in which is the inner artistic nature that leads the brush, tracing contours of the world and of the thoughts: in these massive works, we may find all the elements and the suggestions that came to life thorough Clavé's career, his nocturnal palette, his uncommon talent of combining matter and mind, the world itself with its art sublimation, the historic tradition with the plaisir of travelling – such as the one in New York in the '80s, where he first discovered walls, graffiti, which later will be incorporated in his art production.

Henry Focillon wrote about the «poetry of action» and in Clavé we recall what is the ultimate application of this concept: if it will ever be necessary to have a proof that the essence of Art lives within the artist's hands and vice-versa, Clavé's production would be the crucial evidence, *a praise of hands*, to quote the French critic. In Clavé, the gesture is a prosecution of the mind, a way to arrange the chaos, a vocation from which he never resigns, till his last days.

He investigates the depth of the world via objects, tools and ideas in order to unearth the inner Grace amidst the turmoil: light spots illuminate the earth tones with unexpected gleams, the black, the grey and the Prussian blue are constellated by glimmering stars. A wide production punctuated with twists and fearless experimentations, impetus towards the new and the uncommon, never forgetting the warm tones of his mother country.