

PRESS RELEASE

Antoni Tàpies: New Work

21 April – 15 May 2010

Monday – Friday 10am – 6pm

Saturday 10am – 1.30pm



Matèria i diaris / Matter and Newspapers 2009
mixed media and collage on wood
51 1/4 x 76 3/8 in / 130 x 194 cm

‘Small things can be transcendental. They can change our way of looking at the world.
I think it's important to make art out of almost anything.’

Waddington Galleries is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work dating from 2008 and 2009 by the Catalan artist Antoni Tàpies. His choice of materials continues to be unconventional. Humble, everyday objects such as cloth, brooms, and newspaper are incorporated onto canvas or wood panels, alongside the more traditional media of paint, ink and pencil.

Marks and symbols that are often mysterious and undefined are an important part of Tàpies' artistic language. The letter T, cross or plus sign is one of his most recurring and elusive motifs. This sign allows multiple interpretations, is it meant to be religious or mathematical? A crossing out or a sign of affection? An allusion to himself or to his wife Teresa? We do not know, Tàpies will not say. ‘The meaning of a work depends on the co-operation of the viewer. Those people who live without inner images, lacking imagination and the necessary sensitivity to generate their own set of mental associations, will see nothing at all.’

His works often blur the line between painting and sculpture. He has ‘...always considered a painting as an object, not as a window as people usually do.’ In *Protuberancies / Protuberances* (2009) rotund forms protrude from the wood, bubbling and swelling as if part of a lunar landscape. Tàpies' three-dimensional approach can be seen most clearly in *Tres raspalls / Three Brushes* (2008), where three brooms of varying lengths are fixed to a thick, rough ground of sand-coloured marble dust. The middle brush juts out from the edge of the board, creating a dramatic line that dissects the top half of the picture.

Tàpies' work provokes the senses. In *Signe d'amiració vermell / Red Exclamation Mark* (2009) the arresting, blood red sign of an exclamation mark resonates against a frenzy of monochrome scribbles and markings. The solitary red symbol demands our attention. The tactile quality of works such as *Ondulacions i Braç / Waves and Arm* (2009), where the solid form of an arm hovers over the pattern of waves that are carved into an earthy, almost lava-like mass, contrasts with *Signes sobre marró / Signs on Brown* (2009) where the economy of line gives added significance to the mathematical formula that is brushed graffiti-like onto the simply painted canvas.

Antoni Tàpies was born in 1923 and still uses the same house and studio in Barcelona that was designed for him in 1963 by J.A. Coderch. In 1948 he co-founded (with the Catalan poet Joan Brossa) the first post-war art movement in Spain known as *Dau al Set* and had his first solo exhibition at the Galeries Laietanes, Barcelona in 1950. His work is held in over eighty public collections worldwide including the Kunstmuseum, Basel, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York and Tate, London. In 1993 UNESCO awarded Tàpies the Picasso medal and major retrospectives were staged at the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum in 1995 and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in 2000 and 2004.

A fully illustrated colour catalogue, with an introduction by Sir Norman Rosenthal, accompanies the exhibition.