

# Waddington Galleries

PRESS RELEASE

## ANTONI TÀPIES: WORKS ON PAPER & SCULPTURE

16<sup>th</sup> March – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2005



Fons de Vernís (Varnish background) 1989

*“For me, art is a mechanism, a system that makes it possible to change the spectator's way of looking and to bring him or her closer to a state of contemplation of reality at its deepest level.”*

Antoni Tàpies

Waddington Galleries are pleased to present an exhibition of works on paper and sculpture by Antoni Tàpies, widely considered to be one of Europe's most important post-war artists.

Even more than his oil paintings, Tàpies' works on paper are characterised by spontaneity and expressivity when exploring artistic ideas through the use of diverse materials (latex, varnish, cardboard, collage) and techniques (graffiti, pencil, ball-point pen, brush, imprint). Formal and material boundaries are withdrawn; a personal language of signs and symbols, which alludes to mysticism and spirituality, dominates the picture context.

In contrast to the heavy, earthy quality of the sculptures, Tàpies' works on paper display an elusive, fragmentary character. The works according to Barbara Catoir seem 'to depict the creative process itself as it emerges from the tension between form and formlessness, between the concrete and the abstract'. Particular importance is accorded to the line, as demonstrated in *Fons de Vernís (Varnish background)*. The line takes a variety of forms, ranging from the bold, energetic stroke of the brush, establishing definite contours, to the furious crossing-out and the abstracted scribbles, which derive from the unconscious.

Familiar elements and motives reoccur with a direct physical, tangible quality in Tàpies' sculptures. Not only alluding to but forming an object, the medium permits Tàpies, as described by Andreas Franzke, 'to employ the traces of his work – kneading and compressing, the imprints of hands and tools, incisions and injuries to the material – to full effect as tactile values and conceive of them in counterpoint to the applied graphic signs'.

Antoni Tàpies was born in Barcelona, 1923. He gained early recognition with his participation in the Venice Biennale and at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh in 1952. A year later he had his first solo exhibition in New York at the Martha Jackson Gallery. Since then, Tàpies has exhibited worldwide. His first retrospectives were in 1962 at the Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. His first major exhibition in Great Britain was at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (1965). Tàpies's most recent retrospective was at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2000). The artist has received many awards including the Peace Prize from the United Nations Association in Spain (1984), the Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters from the French Government (1988), and the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale (1993) and was made honorary member of the Royal Academy of Arts, London (1998). In 1991 the Fundació

A fully illustrated catalogue with an introduction by Sarah Whitfield will accompany this exhibition.

For further information and images, please contact

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Antoni Tàpies opened in Barcelona to exhibit and promote the study of Modern and Eastern art and as a place to see important examples of Tàpies work.

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