

**Antoni Tàpies**  
**Profound Certainty**

Exhibition  
14.3-29.9.2019



**FUNDACIÓ ANTONI TÀPIES**

## Antoni Tàpies. *Profound Certainty*

19 March – 29 September 2019

**Collection.** In 1991, just under a year after the Fundació's opening, Antoni Tàpies produced a series of works in Barcelona on synthetic textile mats that he used to cover and protect his studio floor. It was not the first time that Tàpies used this medium. In 1984, he had already experimented with the material, producing two works. However, it was not until 1991 that he created a significant set of works in which the use of this material is a common feature.

Manuel Borja-Villel, then Director of the Fundació's Museum, assembled nineteen of these pieces in an exhibition entitled *Profound Certainty* (3 October 1991 – 5 January 1992). The title sought to evoke the deep conviction with which Tàpies practised his art. Thus, more than an academic proposal concerning this set of works, the goal was to accentuate an emotional frame of mind.

Synthetic textile is a fragile, irregular and soft material; it rolls up at the ends and wrinkles. Tàpies trampled and worked on it, both in the Campins and Barcelona studios. He produced many of these works on pieces of cloth that had already served their purpose, and that had therefore been spattered with paint, stains and footprints. Meanwhile, other works were produced on new material. They were textiles of different kinds and varying quality (plastic, artificial leather, cotton and polyester), on which he sometimes painted on the reverse side, and sometimes on the obverse.

Tàpies unleashed his entire repertoire of icons in these works: crosses, glasses, self-portrait, the body, the skull and bones, a chair, the landscape, letters and numbers. All in all, a certain

sadness, even a certain pessimism, reigns. This is because Tàpies underwent a period in which he made constant references to death and, more specifically, to pain, the physical pain implicit to life, which coincided with a particularly active time, brimming with major exhibitions, awards and the creation and opening of the seat of the Fundació that bears his name. However, it is not an allusion to pain in order to play the victim or to surrender to suffering, but to be aware thereof, to find ways to cope with and overcome it and, perhaps, in the face of everything, to achieve happiness. It is as though, aware of the passage of time, ageing, illness and death, Tàpies was keen to bequeath a living and artistic testament.

Such reflections tie in with Buddhist philosophy, which considers that pain is an integral part of life. According to this way of thinking, understanding where pain comes from not only reduces discontent or malaise, but also helps overcome suffering. That

is why Buddhism invites us to engage in introspection, which helps us to establish the origin of suffering in order to eradicate its causes. In his works, Tàpies echoed these teachings, particularly from the 1980s and throughout the 1990s and 2000s, a period that provides the framework for the series of works featured in this exhibition.

The Fundació revives the exhibition *Certeses sentides*, adding pieces that had not been included in the previous edition, and accompanied by a series of bronze and chamotte clay sculptures from the same period.



Antoni Tàpies at the Campins studio, 2003. Backwards, on the floor, two pieces of synthetic fabric. © Teresa Tàpies Domènech, 2019..

# Antoni Tàpies

## Timeline

**This timeline includes the most important events of Tàpies's life from 1984 to 1991. It also includes some historic events to help put this period into context.**

### 1984

He attends the opening of his exhibition of ceramic sculptures produced between 1981 and 1983 in Zurich (Galerie Maeght Lelong). Travels to San Sebastián for his anthological exhibition at the Museo Municipal de San Telmo. The United Nations Association in Spain awards him the Peace Prize and the Rembrandt Prize from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Stiftung in Basel. Publication of the collector's book *L'estació*, with a text by J. V. Foix and engravings by Tàpies. Collaborates with Edmond Jabès on the book *Dans la double dépendance du dit*. Victòria Combalia publishes the monograph *Tàpies*. The Fundació Antoni Tàpies is constituted in Barcelona, at the artist's own initiative. Solo exhibitions in West Berlin, Paris, Cologne, Madrid, Stockholm, Seoul, Tokyo, New York and Frankfurt.

The discovery of the AIDS virus. / Assault on the Golden Temple in Amritsar (India). Indira Gandhi is assassinated. / China and the United Kingdom reach an agreement over Hong Kong.

### 1985

Publishes *Per un art modern i progressista*, a fourth collection of writings and statements. Travels to Milan on the occasion of his retrospective exhibition organised by the City Council at the Palazzo Reale and simultaneously four Milan galleries exhibit the artist's recent works. In Brussels he attends the

opening of a new anthological exhibition of his work (Musée d'art moderne), as part of Europalia 85. The French government awards him the Prix National de Peinture, and he is appointed member of Stockholm's Kungliga Akademierna för de Fria Konsterna. He is also awarded the Internationale Triennale für farbige Originalgrafik Prize in Grenchen, Switzerland. Publication of *Llull-Tàpies* (project begun in 1973), with engravings by the artist, Pere Gimferrer's selection of texts by Ramon Llull and an epilogue by Miquel Batllori. Solo exhibitions in Barcelona, San Francisco, Madrid, Milan, Düsseldorf, Helsinki, Knokke-le-Zoute, Alcoi, Albacete and Paris.

Lasa and Zabala are murdered by GAL, illegal death squads set up by the Spanish government to fight ETA.

Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. / Iran-Contra affair in the US (1985 and 1986). Sinking of Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior ship in Auckland, New Zealand.

### 1986

Attends the opening of his anthological exhibition at the Wiener Künstlerhaus in Vienna, which subsequently travels to Eindhoven (Stedelijk van Abbemuseum). Exhibits new sculptures and ceramic mural reliefs at the Abbaye de Montmajour (Arles). In New York for the opening of his latest exhibition at the Galerie Maeght Lelong. A member, together with Francisco Bustelo, Dolores Ibárruri and María Zambrano, among others, of the honorary committee of the association organising the tribute to the Swiss International Brigades in Geneva. Actively involved in the Coordinadora per la Salvaguarda del Montseny (Co-ordinating Committee for the Safeguard of Montseny). Takes part in the inaugural exhibition of the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, together with Baselitz, Chillida, Saura, Serra and Twombly. Solo exhibitions in Madrid, Paris, Arles and Barcelona.

Barcelona is chosen to host the 1992 Olympic Games. Spain and Portugal become members of the European Economic Community, the future European Union. Spanish NATO membership referendum resulted in the decision to remain in NATO.

Electoral fraud in the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Imelda flee to Hawaii. / Assassination of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. / Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

## 1987

Actively involved in a campaign organised by the Federació Sindical d'Artistes Plàstics de Catalunya in defence of artists' rights to decide where their works were exhibited. Supports the *Homo faber-Homo ludens* programme organised by the Goethe Institut in Osaka. Publication of *Équation*, a collector's book in conjunction with Jean Frémon. Barbara Catoir publishes *Gespräche mit Antoni Tàpies*. He takes part in the exhibitions *Le Siècle de Picasso* and *Fifty Years of Collecting: An Anniversary Selection. Paintings Since World War II*, in the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), respectively. Solo exhibitions in New York, Madrid, Zurich, Valencia, Cologne and Hannover.

ETA terrorist attack on Hipercor shopping centre in Barcelona.

Nazi Klaus Barbie indicted in Lyon, France for crimes committed during the Second World War. Rudolf Hess commits suicide in Spandau Prison, Berlin where he was serving a life sentence.

## 1988

Invested doctor honoris causa by the Universitat de Barcelona; his investiture speech is about many of the themes on which he will write in future: the social function of art as a medium of understanding and transforming consciousness and behaviour, the significance of certain spiritual and contemplative experiences and the adaptation of these to current needs, and the importance of art in the struggle against commercialism and the trivialization of our experience.

Produces the preliminary sketches for the monumental sculpture *Núvol i cadira* (Cloud and chair), which in 1990 crowns the Fundació Antoni Tàpies building. Publication of *Carrer de Wagner*, with engravings by Tàpies and poems by Brossa. The French government confers on him the title of Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. New anthological exhibitions in Barcelona (Saló del Tinell) and Marseille (Musée Cantini). A retrospective exhibition of his graphic work, organised by the Portland School of Art in Maine, begins a tour around various cities in the USA. Anna Agustí publishes *Tàpies. Obra completa 1943-1960*, first volume of the *catalogue raisonné* of the artist's work. Takes part in the exhibition *Aspects of Collage, Assemblage and the Found Object in Twentieth-Century Art* (the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York). Solo exhibitions in Paris, Basel, Berlin, Barcelona, Rome, London and Saint Gall.

General strike in Spain against the labour reform and the economic policies of Felipe González's socialist government.

Demonstrations in Estonia and Lithuania in favour of independence. / Benazir Bhutto, prime minister of Pakistan. / Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the Soviet Union.

## 1989

He is appointed honorary member of the Catalan Centre of the PEN Club. Retrospective exhibition of his graphic work in Beijing (Fine Arts Hall). Produces three etchings for the collector's book *El árbol de la vida. La sierpe*, with texts by María Zambrano. Travels to Düsseldorf for his anthological exhibition at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, and presents his most recent sculptures and work on cardboard at the Galerie Lelong in Zurich. He designs a set for *Johnny va agafar el seu fusell*, a stage adaptation of the against war novel *Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo. Takes part in the inaugural exhibition of the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM) in Valencia. Solo exhibitions in New York, Buenos Aires, Oporto and Düsseldorf.

Dissolution of the Popular Alliance, a party founded during the Spanish transition by former Francoist leaders, and re-founding as the Popular Party.

Death of Japanese Emperor Hirohito. He is succeeded by his son Akihito. / George H. W. Bush, president of the United States of America. / Military coup in Paraguay; dictator Alfredo Stroessner is overthrown. / Fatwa by Ayatollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie for his book *Satanic Verses*. / Revolutions of 1989, or Fall of Nations in Central and Eastern Europe, and fall of communist regimes in Europe. Civil resistance movements in Poland, Hungary, Eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Romania. / Tiananmen Square massacre, China / Via Baltica. / Frederick W. de Klerk, president of South Africa; start of the end of apartheid. / Fall of the Berlin wall. End to the isolation of East Germany. / End of Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile. / The United States invades Panama and overthrows General Noriega.

## 1990

Unveiling of the monumental sculpture *Núvol i cadira* on the roof of the former Montaner i Simon publishing house, the new premises of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, which opens to the public soon after. Inauguration of the Sala Antoni Tàpies at the Palau de la Generalitat de Catalunya, in Barcelona, for which he painted the mural *Les quatre cròniques* (The Four Chronicles). Awarded the Premio Príncipe de Asturias de las Artes. Travels to Tokyo, where he receives the Praemium Imperiale from the Japan Artists' Association. Invested doctor honoris causa by the University of Glasgow (together with Vaclav Havel, Umberto Eco and James Stirling) and of the Balearic Islands. Collaborates with Pere Gimferrer on the book *La llum*, for which he produces eight etchings. In Madrid, he attends the opening of his retrospective exhibition at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, subsequently shown at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona. Together with other artists, he contributes to the Amnesty International book *Por un mundo sin ejecuciones*. He is appointed honorary member of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. Gregory Rood produces the TV

documentary *Antoni Tàpies* for the BBC. Solo exhibitions in New York, Milan, Brussels, Marseille, Barcelona, Oviedo, Madrid, Paris and Chicago.

Agreement to deploy Mossos d'Esquadra, Catalonia's own police force. The Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona) is founded.

Nelson Mandela is released from prison after 27 years of incarceration. / Reunification of Germany. / End of the Cold War. / Dissolution of the USSR, which culminates in the independence of 15 Soviet Union Republics (11 March 1990 - 25 December 1991). / Mikhail Gorbachev, Nobel Peace Prize. / Lech Wałęsa, former trade unionist and pro-human rights activist, is elected president of Poland. / Start of the Gulf War (which would end in February 1991).

## 1991

Travels to Prague for the opening of his exhibition at the Mičovna Pavilion, in the Royal Gardens of Prague castle. Opening of the exhibition *Tàpies und die Bücher* (Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt). The travelling exhibition *Tàpies. Celebració de la mel*, produced and organised by Fundació Antoni Tàpies, opens in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno). Produces the commemorative poster for the celebration of the quatercentenary of the death of Saint John of the Cross. He goes to Paris, where Galerie Lelong is showing a large group of ceramics done by him between 1981 and 1991. Publication of *Matière du soufflé*, a collector's book done in association with Jacques Dupin. The Fundación Cultural Casa de la Moneda in Madrid awards him the Tomás Francisco Prieto Prize. Solo exhibitions in Barcelona, Cologne, Zurich, Oporto, London, San Sebastián, Burgos, Tokyo, Mexico City, Long Beach and New York.

ETA terrorist attack on Civil Guard barracks in Vic.

The long-standing PCI is dissolved and becomes the Democratic Party of the Left (Italy). / Georgia unilaterally declares independence from the USSR. / Boris Yeltsin, president of Russia. / The parliament of South Africa abolishes the apartheid. / Slovenia and the Republic of Macedonia unilaterally declare independence from Yugoslavia.



## VISITS AND GUIDED TOURS

### Approximations

Guided visits to the exhibitions *Antoni Tàpies. Profound Certainty* and *Albert Serra. Roi Soleil*, and, from Thursday 20 June, *Antoni Tàpies. Profound Certainty and Hannah Collins. I will make up a song and sing it in a theatre with night air above my head*.

**Dates:** Saturdays, at 17.00 h (except 20 April, 18 May and August). | **Duration:** 1 h 15 min. | **Language:** Catalan. | **Admission:** free with museum entrance ticket. | Advance booking not required. Limited places.

### Exclusive visit for the Friends of the Fundació

Exclusive visit for the Friends of the Fundació to the exhibition *Antoni Tàpies. Profound Certainty*, with Núria Homs.

**Date:** Tuesday 2 April, 18.00 h. | **Duration:** 1 h. | **Language:** Catalan. | **Admission:** free for Friends of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies. | Limited places. Advance booking: 934 870 315 / [amics@ftapies.com](mailto:amics@ftapies.com).

### Guided Visits for teachers

A presentation of activities for school audiences with respect to the 2019 exhibitions, with Carles Guerra.

**Dates:** Thursday 4 April 2019, 18.00 h. | **Duration:** 1 h 30 min. | **Admission:** free. | Limited places. Advance booking: [reserves@ftapies.com](mailto:reserves@ftapies.com).

### The Conservation of Antoni Tàpies' Works in Exhibition Galleries

Talk with Mònica Marull.

**Date:** Thursday 2 May 2019, 18.00 h. | **Duration:** 1 h. | **Language:** Catalan. | **Admission:** 8 €. | Limited places. Advance booking: [activitats@ftapies.com](mailto:activitats@ftapies.com).

## Parla, parla. Guided visits

Series of guided visits to the exhibitions currently underway.

**Dates:** Thursday May 16, 2019, 18.00 h: guided visit by Núria Homs; Thursday May 30, 2019, 18.00 h: participatory visit by Maria Sellarès; Thursday June 13, 2019, 18.00 h: guided visit by Núria Solé Bardalet; Thursday to determine,

**Duration:** 1 h. | **Admission:** 8 €. | Limited places. Advance booking: [reserves@ftapies.com](mailto:reserves@ftapies.com).

### Antoni Tàpies and the Public Sphere. Guided Tour

A guided tour centring on several works by Antoni Tàpies in different institutions and public spaces in the city of Barcelona.

**Date:** Saturday 1 June, 11.00 h. | **Duration:** 2 h. | **Language:** Catalan. | **Meeting place:** Fundació Antoni Tàpies. | **Admission:** 8 €. | Limited places. Advance booking required before Thursday 4 October: 932 075 862 / [reserves@ftapies.com](mailto:reserves@ftapies.com). | The tour will use public transport.

### Frames: Aesthetics or Conservation?

Talk on frame systems, with Mònica Marull.

**Date:** Thursday 20 June 2019, 18.00 h. | **Duration:** 1 h. | **Language:** Catalan. | **Admission:** 8 €. | Limited places. Advance booking: 934 870 315 / [amics@ftapies.com](mailto:amics@ftapies.com).

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More information soon available at the site: [fundaciotapies.org](http://fundaciotapies.org).

## ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

### Antoni Tàpies. Other Supports

Activity on supports to open a field of creation in which we can develop our own.

**Dates:** Sundays 7, 5 and 12 April and 26 May 2019, 12.00 h. | **Duration:** 1 h 30 min. | **Age group:** accompanied children aged 4 and above. | **Admission:** € 4 per person. | Limited places. Advance booking: [reserves@ftapies.com](mailto:reserves@ftapies.com).

### Antoni Tàpies. Dance

Dynamic visit to the exhibition that concludes with a dance show by dancer Borja Fernández under the direction of Anna Arboix.

**Dates:** Sundays 28 April and 2 June 2019, and 20 January and 17 February 2019, 12.00 h. | **Duration:** 1 h 30 min. | **Age group:** accompanied children from 6 to 12 years old. | **Admission:** 6 € per person. | Limited places. Advance booking: [reserves@ftapies.com](mailto:reserves@ftapies.com).

## CONCERTS

### Antoni Tàpies and the Music of Asia

This series of concerts curated by Horacio Curti that highlights some ideas in Antoni Tàpies's work related to Asian cultures.

**Dates:** Wednesday 27 March 2019, 18.00 h. | **Duration:** 40 min (talk) and 60 min (concert). | **Admission:** 10 €. | Limited places. Advance booking: [activitats@ftapies.com](mailto:activitats@ftapies.com).

DL: B-6303-2019

Antoni Tàpies, Vas, 1991. © Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona / VEGAP, 2019. Photograph by: © Gasull fotografia, 2019.

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