

# COLNAGHI

ESTABLISHED 1760

## COLNAGHI AND BEN BROWN FINE ARTS PRESENT *TEXTURA*

### Materiality from Old Masters to Modernity

3 to 10 May at the Colnaghi townhouse in New York

*“Art should startle the viewer into thinking about the meaning of life.” – Antoni Tàpies*



Pedro de Mena (1628-1688)  
*Saint Francis of Assisi*



Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012)  
*Cross on Brown, 1960*



El Greco (1541-1614)  
*The Stigmatisation of Saint Francis*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – Colnaghi and Ben Brown Fine Arts present *Textura*, an exhibition celebrating texture and materiality in art which brings together paintings and sculptures from the ancient and modern worlds. Presenting rediscovered and rarely seen works by Old Masters including Luca Giordano, El Greco and Pedro de Mena, the exhibition will show classical works together with modern masterpieces by two artists strongly influenced by texture, religion and historic art: Antoni Tàpies and Miquel Barceló. The exhibition will run from 3 to 10 May at Colnaghi’s recently opened townhouse space at 38 East 70th Street in New York.

A leading highlight of the exhibition is *Saint Francis of Assisi*, an important polychrome sculpture by **Pedro de Mena** (1628-1688), one of the most celebrated sculptors of the Spanish Golden Age. An exceptional wood carver and painter, and a multimedia artist of his time, Pedro de Mena would often enhance his sculptures with glass eyes, human hair and real materials including rope, creating striking and hyper-realistic devotional figures. The appearance of this sculpture coincides with the exhibition *Like Life: Sculpture, Color, and the Body (1300–Now)* at the Met Breuer until 22 July which includes the artist’s *Ecce Homo*, circa 1674-85, acquired by the Metropolitan Museum via Colnaghi, as well as four other important polychrome sculptures recently sold by the gallery\*.

The exhibition will also include a rarely-seen depiction of Saint Francis by Doménikos Theotokópoulos, known as **El Greco** (1541-1614). *The Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* is a powerful and dramatic composition which was first published in 1908, and last seen in public in 1999 at the major show on the artist held at Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid. An exciting rediscovery is *Mars*, a striking composition from the early career of **Luca Giordano** (1634-1705), and a unique subject in the artist's opus boasting bold depictions of flesh, feathers and glistening armour.

The Old Master paintings and sculptures will be shown with modern works by two internationally celebrated Spanish artists: Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012) and Miquel Barceló (b.1957). **Antoni Tàpies** is best known for his mixed media works, and particularly his 'matter paintings' which explored the concept of the 'void', and which often include materials like marble dust, sand and resin. One of his earliest collages consisted of a cross made from paper which had been torn out of the obituary page in a Catholic journal (*Creu de paper de diari*, 1946-47, now in the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona). The cross was a recurrent symbol throughout his work, representing a variety of meanings: the marking of a spot, a sign of existence, a signature using the first letter of his surname, and of course, the crucifix. Tàpies was one of 24 of the world's leading artists invited to create a work in response to the Old Masters for *Encounters: New Art from Old* at the National Gallery, London, in 2000. Works in this exhibition include *Cross on Brown*, a large mixed media painting from 1960; *Painting No. LXXXIV*, a composition from 1958 with mixed media on canvas mounted on wood; and *Tot Marró Amb Relleu*, a mixed media painting from 1961 featuring a prominent cross motif.



**Miquel Barceló** is known for his experimental approach to painting and sculpture, and for producing heavily textured works using a variety of mediums. He holds a great interest in the history of art and has referenced influences including Diego Velázquez, Tintoretto and Rembrandt, as well as 17<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish still life painting. In 2004, Barceló's watercolours illustrating Dante's *Divine Comedy* were shown at the Musée du Louvre in Paris, making him the youngest artist ever exhibited at the museum. In 2007, he completed a

commission for the cathedral in Palma de Mallorca where, over a period of six years, he covered the Santísimo chapel with elaborate terracotta sculptures depicting the miracle of the loaves and the fishes. Works in the exhibition include *3 Tranches de Melon*, a still life from 1998 in mixed media on canvas (*illustrated above*); *Antes del Lance (El Planeta de los Toros)*, a mixed media painting from the bullfight series executed in 2017; and *Pinocchio Mort*, 1998, a bronze sculpture of a skull, complete with extended nose, echoing the Vanitas theme of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Spain.

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

Headline quote - source: Barbara Catoir, Antoni Tàpies (1991). "*Conversations with Antoni Tàpies: With an Introduction to the Artist's Work*"

\* Five polychrome sculptures sold by Colnaghi are included in *Like Life: Sculpture, Color, and the Body (1300–Now)* at the Met Breuer until 22 July. They include *Ecce Homo* by Pedro de Mena (1628-1688) and *The Entombment of Christ* by Luisa Roldan, La Roldana (1652-1710), both of which were acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The others are *Saint Paul the Hermit*, a terracotta by Juan Alonso Villabrille y Ron (*circa* 1663-1732) (now in the Meadows Museum, Dallas); *Saint Sebastian* by Alonso Berreguete (*circa* 1488-1561) (private collection); and *Portrait of a Monk* by Angelo Piò (1690-1770) (private collection).

**About Colnaghi:**

Founded in 1760, Colnaghi is among the oldest and most important galleries in the history of the art market. The gallery initially established itself in London as the premier dealer of prints but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had begun dealing in Old Master paintings and drawings. Colnaghi soon developed important relationships with museums in Europe and with a new generation of collectors in America, including Isabella Stewart Gardner, Henry Clay Frick, Robert Sterling Clark, and Andrew W. Mellon. As Colnaghi's ties to the museum world strengthened, so did its commitment to scholarship—a commitment that remains a priority today. Throughout its long and varied history, Colnaghi has successfully evolved and adapted to changes in the market. The latest shift came in 2015 when the company was taken over by Jorge Coll and Nicolas Cortés, who had established themselves as a major force in the market for traditional art through their eponymous gallery. Colnaghi has since moved into a custom-built gallery in St. James's in London where they show important European Old Master paintings and sculpture, as well as art from the Spanish-speaking world. In 2017 Colnaghi opened a gallery in New York led by Carlos A. Picón, formerly the Curator in Charge of the Department of Greek and Roman Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, expanding their offering to include art of the ancient world. Also in 2017 the company announced the launch of the [Colnaghi Foundation](#), an independent, not-for-profit organisation established to promote Old Masters and Antiquities to a 21st century audience.

Visit: [www.colnaghi.com](http://www.colnaghi.com)

**About Ben Brown Fine Arts:**

Ben Brown Fine Arts opened its first location in the heart of Mayfair in 2004. The gallery has prominently positioned itself on the contemporary art scene with the representation of Ron Arad, Miquel Barceló, Tony Bevan, Yoan Capote, Rob & Nick Carter, Kitty Chou, Awol Erizku, Ori Gersht, Candida Hofer, Claude & François-Xavier Lalanne, Heinz Mack, Vik Muniz, Nabil Nahas, José Parlá, Ena Swansea, Djamel Tatah, Hank Willis Thomas, Gert & Uwe Tobias, Gavin Turk, Not Vital and Jan Worst. Also renowned for its strong expertise in 20th Century Italian Art, the gallery has been exhibiting the work of Lucio Fontana and Alighiero Boetti, amongst others, since its inception.

In 2009 the gallery took the first step in an international expansion with the opening of an exhibition space in Hong Kong. Brown's Hong Kong space was the first London gallery to open in the historic Pedder Building, offering a programme of western and international art exhibitions tailored to the Asian market. Since its establishment the Hong Kong gallery has hosted exhibitions of gallery artists as well as presenting historically significant exhibitions of important modern artists, most notably Pablo Picasso, Alighiero Boetti and Sean Scully. It participates in major art fairs worldwide.

Visit: [www.benbrownfinearts.com](http://www.benbrownfinearts.com)

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