

CADAQUÉS: NEVER-ENDING ART



TODAY, CADAQUÉS CAN TEACH US HOW A SMALL COMMUNITY MANAGES TO COMBINE THE TOURIST INDUSTRY WITH A CONCERNED CULTURAL LIFE AND MANAGES TO ATTRACT RESIDENT ARTISTS BY ORGANIZING FESTIVALS OF MUSIC AND PAINTING AND HAS MADE ART AN UNMISTAKABLE SIGN OF THE SOCIAL IDENTITY OF THE TOWN.

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Cadaqués, some thirty kilometres from the motorway linking Girona and La Jonquera, with barely 2,000 inhabitants in winter and 20,000 in summer, is a village which presents a rare and illuminating phenomenon: the vitality, quality and density of its artistic life, especially in the field of plastic arts. It probably has the highest number of galleries and exhibitions per year, per inhabitant and per square yard to be found anywhere in the world. The work produced there, always up to date with the latest tendencies, can only be compared with that of the big cities, the cosmopolitan arbiters of art. But Cadaqués, above all, remains faithful to its own natural artistic style, Dalinian Surrealism.

This spectacular phenomenon has its roots deep in the unique personality of Salvador Dalí, a universal Catalan who gave to the world the water, the rocks, the beaches, the stones and the sky—of a delicate, intense blue—of the village where he shut himself away with his wife Gala in 1939, and which years before had been visited by the cream of European art: Marcel Duchamp, Paul Eluard, Federico García Lorca... From Dalí and his good friend Pitxot comes the irresistible attraction which artists all over the world feel for this delightful former seafaring village. Today, Cadaqués can teach us how a small community manages to

combine the tourist industry with a concerned cultural life and manages to attract resident artists by organizing festivals of music and painting and has made art an unmistakable sign of the social identity of the town.

Because it is not only the gallery-owners of Barcelona and Girona who establish themselves in Cadaqués, and it is not only painters from all over the world who settle here—permanently or temporarily—it is the village itself which has managed to compete, with all the honours, with the most professional galleries in Catalonia. One must, therefore, visit the municipal museum, in the *Casino de l'Amistat*, or the Rotllan gallery or the Perrot-Moore museum which organizes the *Premi de mini-gravat internacional* and which has announced the foundation of an ambitious permanent workshop in the town's former theatre.

Over the years, some prestigious galleries have closed their doors, giving way immediately to other new ones, no less concerned or active. Amongst these are the Cadaqués gallery, the Nota Bene gallery, the Lanfranco Bombelli gallery, the Carlos Lozano, the Elena Ramos, the Carles de Sicart, the Usquam group gallery and the Fort gallery, without forgetting the exhibitions held in the Port Lligat hotel and the Sirena bookshop.

Who is to be seen at the *vernissages* and the opening nights? Writers, artists, tourists of all sorts, local residents and summer visitors; all of them, in buying works, are benefitted and, at the same time, they keep alive the cultural tradition of the little town of Cadaqués. What painters, sculptors and photographers have exhibited there in the 1986 season alone? A complete list would, perhaps, be excessive. I will therefore restrict myself to the more important exhibitions of last season in which we saw the work of Hernández Pijoan, Richard Hamilton, Tàpies, Guinovart, Bartolozzi and Francesc Català Roca, to name a few artists who need no introduction, to which we could add the experience and skill of Ortiz Alfau, Jordi Curós, Adolf Genovart, Aguilar Moré, Todó, Carbó Berthould, and a long list of other important names. Perhaps we should also mention those from further afield who have exhibited in the town: Giuseppe Santomaso, Koyama, Phil Clarke, Dany Rauch and Tom Lennards.

On a peaceful summer evening by the shore, or else in the streets that seem to play hide-and-seek with the newcomer, there is nothing like discovering an artist whose work we do not yet know: Antoni Torres, Lourdes Civit, Fernando Poveda... Cadaqués is indeed a festival of the plastic arts. ■