

MARTA GUALDA

Artifacts

Ignacio Pinazo (Valencia, 1849 - Godella, 1916)
Female Nude (Academy) 1880

Everything vibrates around the woman, nothing remains except her strong, lively, fully present figure. Everything falls apart around her, only she is solid, only her body remains while even her hand, in motion, becomes blurred. Beyond the sensuality of the interview, the vision of forbidden intimacy, we contemplate life in all its richness, in its beautiful mutability. Pinazo advances towards modernity remembering Velázquez, and opens the way to Sorolla with a language of undone brushstroke that wants to capture the fleetingness of the real, the beating of life.



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Description and formal analysis

Pinazo works in this academy, probably an early work in his career, with his personal black and earthy colors, neutral and dark tones on which he shines, reflecting the light, the bare skin of a woman sitting on a simple wooden bench. His body is rotated from the knees to turn our backs, showing us the neck, head bowed, chest and abdomen line, finally legs crossed securing the position. The woman's movement is captured by the painter with the skill of a master of impressionism; The body rotates and closes on itself, hiding in our eyes at times, the right arm in the air, the hand just a blur in motion, although magnificently worked in space, perfectly integrated into the atmosphere. Around it the air vibrates with loose, energetic brushstrokes, which bring life to the neutral and dark background inherited from the great master of Spanish painting, Diego Velázquez. As in the works of that one, here the space and the figure merge perfectly, they almost feel the air around the model, the light that vibrates on their skin. Also like Velázquez, Pinazo captures the lively life of the figure through a gestural brushstroke, skillfully controlled, and a subtle chromatic game based on neutral colors. The pictorial material accumulates or withdraws, reflecting the eternally mutable character of reality itself.

In this academy, work therefore of study, of learning, we also see a great mastery of composition and drawing. The figure is large, monumental, and its silhouette approaches and moves away from the margins of the canvas creating expressive moments of spatial tension that endow the image with a corporeal majesty. This dynamic game is also based on a firm and powerful drawing in its line, whose strength remains under the layer of paint, preventing the roundness of the shapes from being lost. In this way Pinazo builds both corporeality and three-dimensional space with no more supporting elements than the stroke, the brushstroke and a magnificent modeling of the lights and shadows, again heir to Baroque masters such as Velázquez.

Ignacio Pinazo

Born into a humble family, Pinazo was forced from a young age to contribute different occupations to the maintenance of his home. He had only completed the eighth year at school when his mother died of cholera, so he soon had to be employed in various trades, including those of silversmith, tile decorator, baker, gilthead and fan painter. However, his tenacious and hard-working character led him to develop a parallel artistic training since his adolescence, while making a living as a hatter. Thus, in 1864 he will enter the Academy of Fine Arts of San Carlos de Valencia,

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where he was a disciple of José Fernández Olmos. It is more than possible that this proletarian origin, his familiarity with the direct work of the materials, largely determined the personality of his mature language, which some approach that of Francisco de Goya in his emotional and expressive autonomy.

In 1871 Pinazo was presented for the first time to the National Exhibition of Fine Arts in Madrid, and two years later the sale of a painting allows him to pay for what will be his first study trip to Rome. Until then the young painter had developed a style of academic character, but from his stay in Italy he will begin a more intimate pictorial line, framed within Impressionism.

In 1876 he returns to Rome, this time thanks to a scholarship that will allow him to remain in the Italian capital until 1881. It will be precisely there where he begins to paint his great history paintings, original works that move away from the prevailing conventions of the genre then. However, on his return to Valencia he will abandon historical themes and instead begin to paint familiar scenes, nudes and themes of everyday life. In addition, he begins to paint outdoors, in the manner of French impressionists. In fact, it is currently considered a forerunner, both in terms of theme and style, by Joaquín Sorolla and Francisco Domingo.

In 1884 Pinazo will march temporarily from Valencia due to a cholera epidemic, settling in the house that the banker José Jaumandreu owned in the nearby town of Bétera. From his return that same year, and until 1886, he will teach at the School of Fine Arts in Valencia. During these years he will receive numerous commissions from the Valencian aristocracy, while showing his works to the public at the National Exhibitions, the absolute center of the artistic panorama of the Spain of the time. He was awarded in these samples with a silver medal in 1881 and 1885 and with a gold medal in 1897 and 1899. His recognition will also lead him to be appointed academic of San Carlos (Valencia) in 1896 and San Fernando (Madrid) in 1906, and in fact at his death, in 1916, the commemorative acts of his life and his work will take place.

Thematic analysis

The conception of the drawing of the natural as the fundamental axis of the studies of the academies of painting was born in the Italian Renaissance, following the theoretical and practical approaches of Vasari and Zuccaro. In the Italy of the XVI the first academies themselves are created, and their model will soon be disseminated through Spain - politically and socially linked to Italy through the viceroyalty of Naples, Spanish territory - and the rest of Europe. The Italian model will become

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the benchmark of the most advanced artistic culture, evolving later until the creation of the Royal Academies of Fine Arts in the eighteenth century. Although in Spain we find academies already at the beginning of the 17th century, they will be created fundamentally in the painters' workshops, without institutional support, so they will not be able to last in time. We will wait until 1648, the year of the founding of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Paris under the patronage of Louis XIV. Based on the Italian model, this French academy will create a legal and curricular structure that will become the model to be implemented in the rest of Europe, and that will eventually lead to the Royal Academies of Fine Arts: San Fernando in Madrid in 1752, Saint Martin's Lane in London in 1768, etc. According to this French model, the cornerstone of the academy's teaching was the drawing of the natural, living model.

These types of drawings made from a living model were studies of anatomy, movement and composition, and are still known today as academies. Over time, these works will be carried out not only with coal or pen, but also as complete sketches in oil, combining the study of the figure and the light with that of color.

Historic context

The second half of the nineteenth century is characterized in Spain by the rapid growth of the population that, however, does not have as a counterpart a great economic or industrial development, being Catalonia and the Basque Country the only regions where there is a notable industrialization. That is why the rise of the bourgeoisie that occurs at this time will not spread evenly throughout the country, but will focus on the most economically developed areas, leaving in the rest of Spain an eminently traditionalist society, based on agriculture and livestock.

It is also a time of complicated political situation; until 1868 the moderate liberal tendency predominates, but that year the Glorious Revolution overthrows Queen Elizabeth II and the progressive bourgeoisie rises with victory. A year later a Constitution will be proclaimed that defends new rights such as freedom of expression, of the press or of worship, which, however, will run into strong opposition from the traditionalist sector. This confrontation will lead to the Third Carlist War in 1872, which ends in the restoration of the monarchy (1874-75). Alfonso XII, son of Isabel II, is crowned king of Spain and presents himself as a Catholic, constitutionalist and liberal monarch. A period of peace begins that will alternate conservative and liberal governments and will see the labor movement born in Spain. The century closes with the outbreak in 1898 of the war with the United States, missing the same colonies that year: Cuba, the

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Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam. This loss in Spanish society caused a state of frustration and pessimism that would lead to a new era based on the demand for the democratization of the State and the end of caciquismo and corruption.

Spanish impressionist school

The development of impressionism in Spain will have its origin, as in France, at the Barbizon school in the mid-19th century. The figure of Carlos de Haes, a Belgian painter based in Madrid, who became a landscape professor at the San Fernando Academy of Fine Arts in 1857 was key. From his chair, Haes promoted the faithful reproduction of nature following, precisely, the Barbizon tradition. Among his students we find Aureliano de Beruete and Darío de Regoyos, two of the main representatives of Hispanic impressionism. Also, many Spanish artists will make study trips to Paris and Brussels, where they will come into contact with outdoor painting. Finally, the school will crystallize between 1886 and 1890, when the European contributions of impressionism and post-impressionism were received.

Special mention deserves the Valencian impressionist school, whose main driver is Ignacio Pinazo. Painter who worked outdoors, directly in nature, shows impressionistic features in his works from 1872. His theme, inspired by light and Mediterranean customs, set the tone for younger painters such as Joaquín Sorolla and Francisco Domingo and differentiated the Valencian impressionism of the cultivated in the rest of Spain. Thus, in a Valencia of agrarian economy, almost without industrial bourgeoisie and with high illiteracy rates, a bright and modern painting school flourished against all odds, one of the most important creative groups in Spain at that time.

Comparative study

Ignacio Pinazo made several studies of the female nude, always looking to capture the fleeting moment, immortalize it through his wise work of brushstroke and color. Thus, we find parallels to the work under study in works such as *Woman's Nude* (1912, Museo del Prado, fig. 1), a painting certainly later than ours, in which however we can see a similar conception of the body Feminine in intimacy, hiding and being seen at the same time, as in our canvas.

Also his drawing *José making soap bubbles* (h. 1883, Prado, fig. 2) is shown close to our academy; in it we see that same unwrapped stroke, creator of shapes and volumes, of a rotationally corporeal, real anatomy. Another drawing of his son, entitled *José seated at the piano* (h. 1883, Prado, fig. 3), shows the same way of approaching the figure: on his back, ignorant of our presence, surrounded by an environment that is blurred and does not

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Subtracts prominence, focusing the viewer's gaze on the fleeting image. Finally, we must also point out the similarities at the compositional level between our work and a Self-portrait with palette (no date, IVAM, fig. 4). In both paintings, colored on the other hand very close, the figure is related in the same way to the frame, approaching it and moving away, as if it were about to leave our field of vision.



Fig.1

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Fig.2

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Fig.3



Fig.4

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