

## Antoni Tàpies

(Barcellona, 1923 - 2012)

The art of Tàpies has often been associated with the material practices of Burri's painting, according to a principle of shared objective realism and the purification of reality, which can be applied both to Burri's *Sacchi* (burlap pieces) and *Plastiche* (plastic pieces) and to Tàpies *Muri* (wall pieces). But while this is perhaps another reason to have a work by the artist in the CRT Collection, in dialogue with the GAM collection, it is the absolute specificity of his varied research that necessitates his presence in a survey of works that acknowledges the pictorial experiences of postwar Europe.

The scratch and the fall of the material, which present the viewer with the work's stratified body, are affective signs in his painting, and possess the biographical and historical dimension of memory: "I must go back a long way to account for the manner in which I slowly became aware of the evocative power of images of walls. They are memories from adolescence and my youthful years trapped between the walls within which I spent the wars. The entire drama suffered by adults and all the atrocities produced by an era which appeared to be going, between the catastrophes, adrift of its inclinations, all of this was drawn out and inscribed beneath my eyes, [...] all the walls bear the signs of the torture of our people and of the inhuman prohibitions inflicted on them. The effect, however, of these circumstances was emphasized by cultural legacies. Everything, from the popularization of archaeology which I devoured, to Leonardo's precepts, the Dada destructions, and Brassai's photographs, contributed to the fact that, already in my works from 1945 there are links to street graffiti..." ("The Wall as an Expressive Form in Contemporary Art," in *Essays*, 1969).

This historical dimension is followed by a more concentrated and individual phase in his painting. *Painting no. XLV*, 1957, belongs to Tàpies' most secret period, when he was closed off in a private universe traversed by shadings of lyricism and by an, albeit extremely distant, memory of romanticism. Tàpies arrives at this point seeking to conquer the space of silence: "A whole new landscape, as in the *Crossing of the Mirror*, suddenly appeared to me, opening up the most deep-seated essence of things." The abrasion of the material becomes subtler in these works, turning into a corpuscular dust, a fading away of galaxies and a sinking into the microcosm, a feeling that one might relate to the sublime.  
(EV)