



Exhibition: **Pierre Soulages. VII Julio González International Award.**

IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern
February 12 - April 15, 2007

Organized by: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

Curator: Tomàs Llorens

IVAM has organized the exhibition "Pierre Soulages. VII Julio González International Award", which brings together a series of seven large-format pieces belonging to the painter and may be seen until April 15.

Born in Rodez, in Southern France, Soulages joined the French art scene at the end of the 1940's, shortly after the Second World War. His work tends to be associated with the abstract painting of the post war period and especially with Informalism and its American counterpart Abstract Expressionism. The artist himself, however, has always rejected these associations, and it must be recognized that his painting is dominated by an impulse towards a formal clarity that is hardly compatible with the dramatic tendency of these movements.

Throughout the 1960's, Soulages' paintings were covered in black until they attained a pure monochrome, something that became a characteristic quality of his work from the late 70's. This evolution must be seen, not as a quest for austerity (and therefore, not in a minimalist key), but rather as a triumph of "excess and passion", in the artist's own words. Following a tradition of European painting that extends from Caravaggio to Courbet, with Zurbarán

and Rembrandt between, Soulages reclaims black as the color that best reveals light.

The evolution of Soulages' painting after the war could be seen in a monographic exhibition that IVAM dedicated to him in 1989. For this second presentation, IVAM has chosen a later work: a series of seven canvases of the same size that function as a polyptych, or to use the musical metaphor the American critic James Jonson Sweeney coined in 1962 for Soulages' painting, "like a chord played with two hands on a monumental keyboard."

Soulages' work is represented in collections in MoMA, New York, MNAM (Georges Pompidou Center, Paris), and in the best museums of modern European and American art. IVAM possesses an important body of his work.

On the occasion of this exhibition, a catalogue featuring texts by Tomás Llorens, Alfred Pacquement, Consuelo Císcar and Raquel Gutiérrez has been published.