



Fundación BBVA

EXPLOSION! The Legacy of Jackson Pollock

24 October 2012 - 24 February 2013

The Fundació Joan Miró presents *Explosion! The Legacy of Jackson Pollock*, an exhibition curated by Magnus af Petersens and organised in conjunction with the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, with the sponsorship of the Fundación BBVA.

Kazuo Shiraga painted with his feet, suspended by ropes above the canvas, Shozo Shimamoto hurled paint-filled glass bottles at his paintings, and Niki de Saint Phalle fired a rifle at her panels that she had prepared with balloons of paint under layers of plaster. *Explosion!* features some 70 works by 35 artists from the period spanning from the late forties to the seventies.

After the Second World War, many artists wanted to start from scratch by attacking painting, which was seen to represent artistic conventionality. *Explosion!* takes off where modernism ends; when it was so ripe that it was on the verge of exploding. Which it did, in the form of a variety of new ways of making art. Practically every door was opened with an aggressive kick, and a new generation of artists began seeing themselves not as painters or sculptors but simply as artists, who regarded all material and subjects as potential art. That is how the North American artist and writer Allan Kaprow, the man who invented the word “happening”, described the situation in 1956 in his now legendary essay “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock”. Even if doors were opened to all techniques, much of the new art – happenings, performance and conceptualism – sprang from new approaches to painting. There was a development, a shift of focus, from painting as an art object and as representation, to the process behind the work, to the ideas that generate art, and performative aspects.

“In *Explosion!* we want to explore the performative and conceptual elements in painting, and the painterly elements in conceptualism and performance,” says exhibition curator Magnus af Petersens.

The exhibition follows a theme that runs from Jackson Pollock’s drip paintings, via the fascination with chance as a method for creating art, to performance and conceptual approaches. The exhibition presents the Japanese artist group Gutai (1954-1972), which operated in radical ways in the borderland between painting and performance, anticipating many later artistic practices and strategies such as conceptualism, land art and installation. In Europe, they exhibited together with artists from the nebulous artist group Zero, also featured in *Explosion!* with works by the co-founders Günter Uecker and Otto Piene.

Explosion! shows works by thirty-five artists and comprises paintings, photos, videos, performance, dance and audio works and instructions. Since the exhibition includes action rather than focusing exclusively on painting, performance and documentation of performance are a vital part of the material that is presented, not least the footage of Jackson Pollock, Yves Klein and the group Gutai painting in their performance-like painting acts, which have provoked much artistic controversy. Also controversial were artists like Lynda Benglis, Hermann Nitsch, Andy Warhol and Janine Antoni, who are featured in the exhibition.

Explosion! adheres to no particular style or ism, and it is not confined to a geographically limited art scene, but reveals the kinship between apparently unrelated artistic approaches.

Explosion! The Legacy of Jackson Pollock is a co-production of the Moderna Museet and the Fundació Joan Miró, and was presented at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm in summer 2012.