An abstract painting by Manuel Maldonado, featuring a complex composition of overlapping, textured brushstrokes in a rich palette of purples, blues, pinks, and earthy tones. The forms are organic and somewhat recognizable, possibly suggesting a face or a figure, but they are heavily distorted and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is one of intense emotional expression and formal experimentation.

MANUEL MALDONADO, PINTOR 1915-1984

EXPOSICIÓN TEMPORAL
15 mayo - 1 septiembre 2024

MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES DE GRANADA
Palacio de Carlos V - Alhambra

MANUEL MALDONADO, PINTOR 1915-1984

Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez (1915-1984) was a Spanish painter born in Granada. He received his first art lessons at the Granada Artistic Centre. In 1928, he enrolled in the Granada School of Arts and Crafts, where he later served as a professor from 1942 to 1948. During this time, he studied under the tutelage of the painter Gabriel Morcillo Raya and met other artists such as José Guerrero and Miguel Pérez Aguilera.

In the 1940s, Maldonado obtained several grants by winning art contests, enabling him to travel widely through Spain and Europe. In 1947, the Count of Cartagena Foundation awarded him a scholarship to study in Italy. This life-changing experience drove him to break away from academicism and traditional aesthetic norms. Since then, especially between 1966 and 1976, the artist frequently travelled to various Spanish and European cities, which became the subjects of many of his works.

In the field of painting, Maldonado explored various genres, including portrait, nude, still life and landscape. His late impressionism was especially evident in his landscapes. However, his extraordinary use of colour and light remains a key element throughout all of his artistic production.

While less known than his paintings, Maldonado also excelled as a muralist and a mosaic artist. Some examples of his work can be found in the churches of Santa María Micaela, Corpus Christi, and Santo Domingo. In each of these, the artist experimented with geometric compositions inspired by Cubism. In 1974, Maldonado also began to learn the art of engraving at the Rodríguez-Acosta Foundation.

Following his death in 1984, Maldonado's widow, Carmen Ruiz Jiménez, donated many of his works to the Regional Government of Andalusia, including 76 paintings, 45 drawings, 47 prints, 37 engraving plates, 1 sculpture, 1 travel journal with sketches, and 6 medals obtained by Maldonado in art contests. The donation process was concluded in 2005.

Forty years after his passing, this exhibition honours the legacy of both Manuel Maldonado and his wife Carmen, whose generosity enriched our artistic heritage.

Cover image:

Bodegón con cesto de vidrios, sin fecha, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.

Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.



Arlequín pelirrojo, 1952-1955, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez.
Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.

Portrait

Maldonado's studio was frequented by the notables of Granada, including bourgeois, nobles, and intellectuals. Among these intellectuals was Emilio Orozco Díaz, a distinguished professor, historian, and director of the Museum of Fine Arts of Granada.

Maldonado also portrayed those close to him, like his grandfather, his mother, and, on multiple occasions, his muse and wife, Carmela.

In his portraits, Maldonado often employs simple compositions, depicting seated figures with a contemplative, distant gaze and a relaxed attitude. Through these formal elements, he evokes a sense of solemnity and stillness. The use of vibrant colours and specific techniques clearly reflects the influence of the painter Gabriel Morcillo, from whom Maldonado probably borrowed the figure of the harlequin.



Retrato de Emilio Orozco, c. 1962, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez.
Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar[©].



Retrato de Carmela sentada con abanico y traje negro (Detail), 1942, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.

Nude

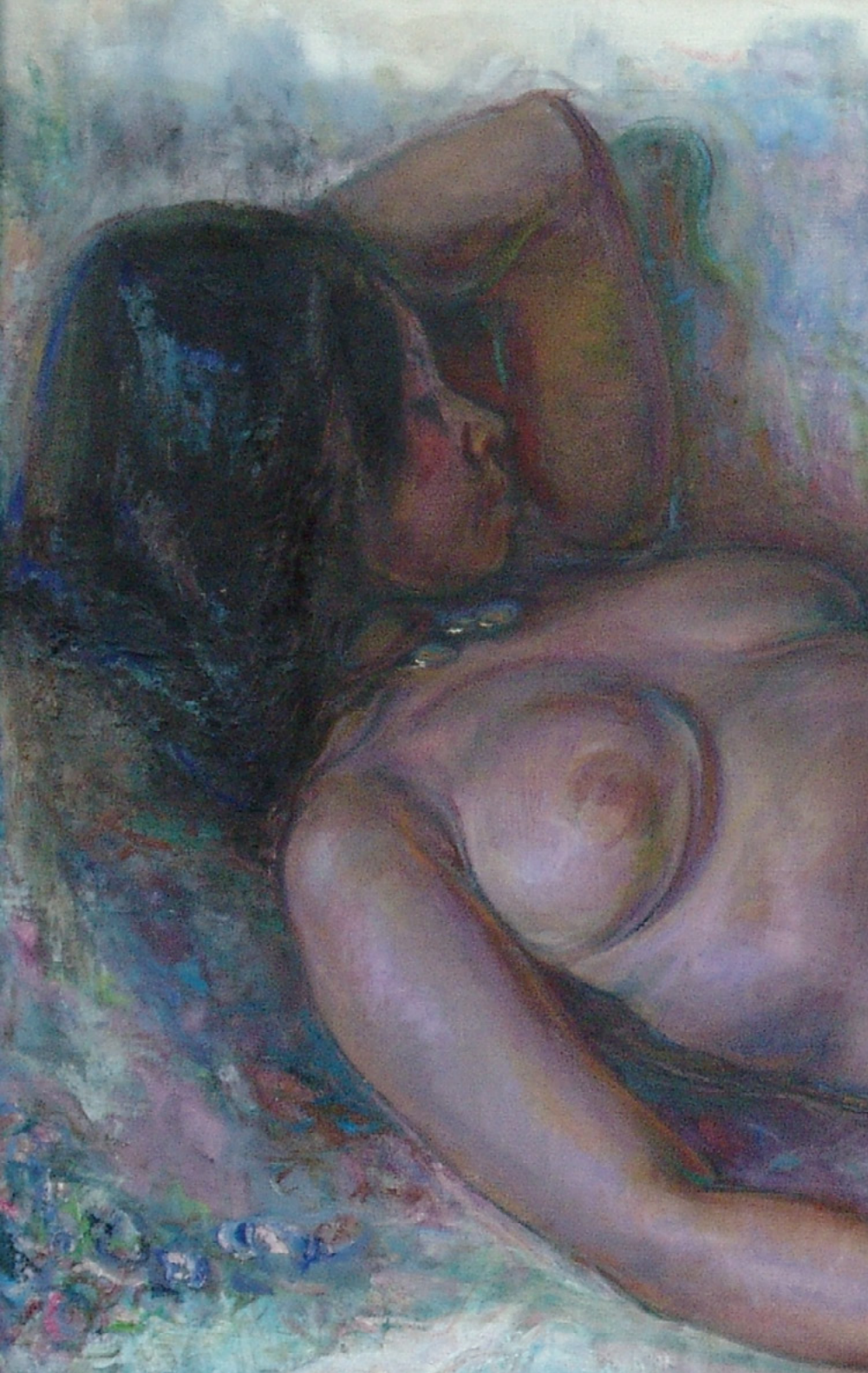
In his many nudes, Maldonado frequently depicted voluptuous, earthy, and suggestive women, infusing his works with an emotional dimension through chromatic tension.

His women are layered against a neutral background, sitting in a calm and casual attitude, often tilting their heads to the side or turning their backs toward the viewer to conceal their identities. At times, they hide their nudity with flowers, embroidered shawls, or hand fans. Their ample bodies often sprawl languidly on beds and sofas that are barely sketched, as the painter focuses on capturing the details of their tight figures.

Maldonado blended strokes of unusual and unexpected colours –like blues and violets– with the warm tones of tanned and brown models –like the Tahitian or Zenaide–, aiming to evoke a sense of disquiet and surprise.



Desnudo de espaldas, c. 1963, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez.
Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.



Desnudo de Zenaide tumbada (Detail), 1974, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.

Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar[©].

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Still life

Maldonado meticulously composes his still lifes, filling the entire canvas with a carefully selected chromatic palette dominated by muted tones and subtle hues.

His paintings depict a variety of subjects, ranging from flowers and musical instruments to domestic objects like vases, bottles and cups, made of glass and porcelain. Less frequently, he captured spools of thread and sewing machines. This diversity allowed him to experiment extensively with composition, colour, and brushwork.



Bodegón con botella de anís y máquina de coser, o Bodegón del Anís del Mono, c. 1962, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.





Bodegón con cesto de vidrios, sin fecha, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.
Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.

As for his style, Maldonado occasionally follows the prevailing classicism in Granada, and at other times, he re-oriented his art toward Cézanne's still lifes. He borrows the flat compositions from the post-impressionist painter, arranging the objects in the foreground against a plain background and manipulating traditional perspective by a lack of depth.

Influenced by Morcillo, the painter renders the objects in pastel colours –like pinks, violets, and blues–, giving them a ghostly and dreamlike appearance. However, vibrant colours can also be found in some of his works, such as *Bodegón con mandolina*.



Bodegón con mandolina (Detalle), c. 1962, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.
Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar[©].

Mural painting

In addition to his work in traditional painting, Maldonado also dedicated his later years to mural painting. This exhibition showcases some of the sketches and studies made by the artist in preparation for his most renowned works.

Between 1960 and 1961, Maldonado painted a mural for the church of Santa María Micaela in Granada. Based on a design by Miguel Rodríguez-Acosta, the artist sketched a mural for the front of the chancel and proceeded to paint directly onto the walls without any preliminary outline. In 1963, he further embellished the church's façade with three large mosaics made of marble tesserae.

In 1962, Maldonado was commissioned to paint the murals for both the front and sides of the chancel in the church of San Miguel in Úbeda (Jaén). In this work the artist demonstrates a highly personal interpretation of Florentine mural painting.



Estudio preparatorio para el mosaico de la fachada de la iglesia de Santa María Micaela, c. 1961, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.



Mosaico de la fachada de la iglesia de Santa María Micaela. Imagen: Ricardo Tenorio Vera.



Landscape

Throughout his career, Maldonado depicted a variety of European capitals, including Amsterdam, Paris, London, and Rome. However, he also found inspiration in smaller towns like Castro Urdiales (Cantabria), Bilbao, and Ondarroa (Biscay).

The artist freely experimented with the conventions of the genre, always pushing boundaries. He masterfully captured subjects rooted in reality using a vibrant palette and loose, expressive brushstrokes. Through these formal elements, his landscapes offer a personal and intimate vision of the world in which realism has no place.

His paintings reflect his extensive travels, which greatly influenced his artistic development. In 1949, his first visit to Italy inspired vibrant canvases featuring magnificent monuments. During the 1960s and 1970s, Paris influenced the awakening of a unique impressionistic style in Maldonado's work, which remained in his lively portrayals of Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands.



Columna trajana, o Paisaje romano, 1977, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.



Paisaje de Bilbao, sin fecha, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.

Paisaje urbano. Los tejados de París (Detail), 1977, Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada. Imagen: Carlos C. Vilar®.



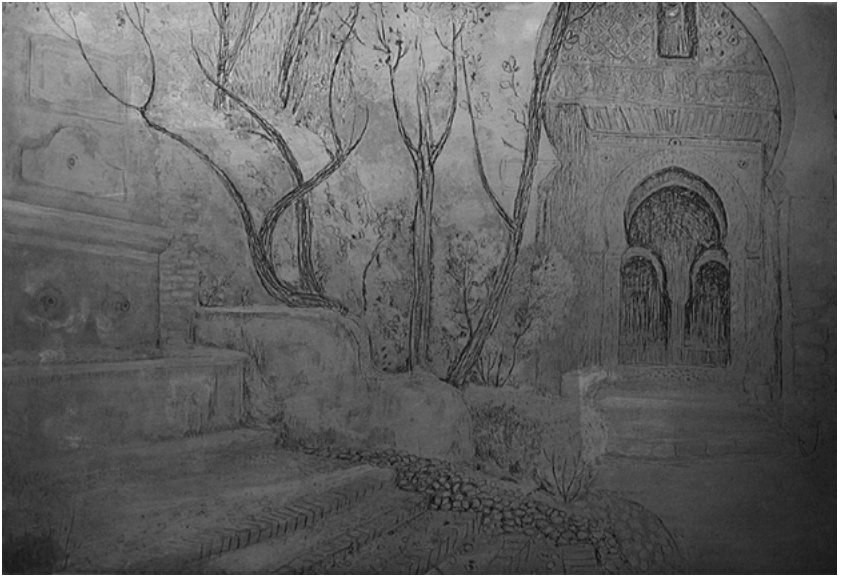
Engraving

Between 1973 and 1979, the Rodríguez-Acosta Foundation established the Graphic Arts Experimentation Centre, where Maldonado was an apprentice.

In 1974, a group exhibition displayed the first works that emerged from this project, featuring Maldonado's series of prints entitled *Magia y truco*. These prints were part of the collection *Testimonio y presencia de las casas de Granada*, completed by the artist in 1977. It consisted of seventeen aquatint and etching prints, each depicting buildings in Granada linked to important local figures like as Falla, Albéniz, Lorca or Ganivet.

In 1976, a compilation of prints entitled *Granada a Rafael Alberti* was published as a tribute to the Andalusian poet. Maldonado contributed to it alongside other local artists such as Manuel Ángeles Ortiz, José Guerrero or Miguel Rodríguez-Acosta.

The works exhibited here today enable a better understanding of the two stages of this artistic discipline. The first consist of etching a surface, in this case, in a zinc plate with the action of an acid. In the second, the plate is inked, and after passing it through the press with an overlapping paper, the print is obtained.



Puerta de la Justicia y Pilar de Washington Irving, (plancha de zinc), 1976 Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.



Puerta de la Justicia y Pilar de Washington Irving, (estampa) 1976 Manuel Maldonado Rodríguez. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.



Retrato del pintor Manuel Maldonado, sin fecha, Francisco López Burgos. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.

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VISITING CONDITIONS

From May 15, 2024

Until September 1, 2024

Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada

Palacio de Carlos V - Alhambra

OPENING HOURS

Opening hours until June 15:

Tuesday to Saturday: 10:00 - 18:00 h.

Sundays and public holidays: 10:00 - 15:00 h.

Closed on Mondays.

Opening hours from June 16:

Tuesday to Saturday: 10:00 - 15:00 h.

Closed on Mondays.

Open on the following local holidays: May 30 and August 15.

General admission fee: €1.50

CONDITIONS FOR FREE ADMISSION

Admission is free for the following persons throughout the year upon presentation of the corresponding accreditation:

- Citizens of EU Member States.
- Students.
- Persons aged over 65.
- Pensioners.
- Persons with a disability of at least 33 per cent.
- Members of ICOM, ICOMOS and WEA.

ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Via the Museum of the Alhambra on the ground floor of the Palace of Charles V. We recommend that you request further information regarding the conditions of use by calling the telephone number for visitors to the Alhambra: 958 027 971.

GROUP VISITS

Visits may be arranged by email:

difusion.museobagr.ccul@juntadeandalucia.es

