

**RAFAEL RUIZ BALERDI**  
*Tizas gran formato*  
22 September – 2 December 2022

*I paint to know myself, to know fear and probably to overcome it.<sup>1</sup>*

CarrerasMugica is pleased to present *Tizas gran formato* (Large-format Chalks) on 22 September, the gallery's third exhibition of the work of Rafael Ruiz Balerdi (Donostia-San Sebastián, 1934-Altea, Alicante, 1992).

On exhibit are eleven large-format works which, although actually made with pastel and wax on brown paper, are generally known as "chalks". Ruiz Balerdi started using this method in *Paisaje imaginario* (Imaginary Landscape), 1978, following a trip to China and it became his technique of choice during his "*creative apogee*" from 1980 to 1985, a period when he had a large number of exhibitions in Spain, France and Germany.

*Balerdi did not paint something that already existed; he just organized forms and colours. His hand moved as if in a state of trance, creating lines and stains of colour. He did not make "referential images", although in the end result one can appreciate elements in common with those of a naturalist description, elements in common with those of a more plastic rendering of appearances: distances, depths, densities, clarities, mirror-like areas, opaque areas. Once again, a meeting between the informalist psychogram and a hankering after the appearance of the sensorial world [...].*

*Pastel and wax allowed him two things at the same time: brightness of colour and an unfettered movement of the hand. The inexpensive, light and manageable paper was a part, albeit secondary, of the discovery. The seismograph, Calvo Serraller's incisive image to define his modus operandi, not only describes the unabated movement of his hand, either sweeping or millimetric, with painstaking or broad strokes, but also the continuous movement of the support, the infinite substitution of the blank paper, the constant possibility of starting all over again. Or of continuing. Because one of the strongest sensations his work conveys is that of continuity [...].*

*[...] the references to the purity of his work and to the absence of meaningfulness and pathos should not fool us into thinking it is intellectual feebleness, a merely physical act or mindless automatism. Quite on the contrary, in these works with pastel, beneath what is at first glance chaotic, the painter's mental power, his unswerving ability to order, his control of the space are more than evident [...].<sup>2</sup>*

Rafael Ruiz Balerdi's work is to be found in many collections and museums, including Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao; Museo San Telmo, Donostia-San Sebastian; and MNCARS, Madrid.

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<sup>1</sup> *El Diario Vasco*, 12 February 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Javier Viar: *Balerdi. La experiencia infinita*, Ed. Sala de exposiciones Rekalde (Bilbao) & Koldo Mitxelena (Donostia-San Sebastián).