

Success

The little that is known about the life of Jacinto Salvadó is worthy of a novel written by Alejandro Dumas.¹ A biography that covers two world wars and a civil war, the traumatic death of a son, a serious illness when he was 10 years old, long trips on foot through the north of Spain, problems with the authorities, residence in different European countries, various avant-garde characters from the turn of the century, Freemasonry, anarchism, intrigues between famous painters, a failed trip to Hollywood, the mecca of cinema, deep official oblivion and later deserved historical recovery.² All the necessary ingredients to endow Salvadó with a strong personality that crystallizes creatively, because everything a painter needs is in books, in the studio and on the street, that is, in life, and Jacinto had a lot of life.³ The critical luck that our protagonist has had over time is different and, despite being highly valued in some periods,⁴ when he reached old age he had become a “transpapelado”.⁵ It was only at the very end of his life when, thanks to the work of gallery owners such as Juana Mordó⁶ and Basilio Muro,⁷ and critics such as Juan Manuel Bonet,⁸ he began to carve out the place that history reserves for this successful Spanish painter. And why do I say successful if I previously pointed it out as a forgotten one? Because from my point of view, one of the highest levels to which a painter can aspire is that of being able and wanting to paint until the end. Overcoming uncertainty, fashion, setbacks, the public, the market, critics, life, daily responsibilities, economic needs, is mu- ————— 1 The Count of Monte Cristo (1844), Black Tulip (1850), etc 2 For an expanded development of these events, I recommend referring to the text Biographical Approach to Jacinto Salvadó (Guillermo Gómez-Ferrer), available on the painter's website: www.jacintosalvado.com 3

Time has carried out the work conscientiously with this painter, since few are the documented testimonies that we have left about Salvadó. The comments that Jacinto himself could make in his old age and little else. Much of his work is still unaccounted for and there must be quite a few uncatalogued paintings scattered around Europe. 4 “Spain has sent the young Salvadó, whose artistic personality began with Rouault, while his soul ignites, within the spirit of his homeland, in baroque flames” (Wilhem Uhde); “Another Catalan painter is Salvadó, with a certain name at that time” (Joaquín Torres-García); “His name is not among those that are heard pronounced more often, and despite the fact that all his work arouses an unusual respect, he is not given the full confidence that should be granted to one of the best artists of today. day” (Nino Frank); “Painter of modern life in its most tragic and humorous aspect (...) Some works in which he shows that he has learned the lesson of Cezanne” (unsigned article in the European edition of the Chicago Tribune). 5 This is what Jose María Moreno called it in one of his chronicles for the weekly Triunfo. The circumstances of this oblivion may be many, but his desire to distance himself from cultural epicenters and avoid institutional or institutionalized circles of power, the fact that he does not have a circle of palmero friends and, above all, his declared independence from almost all official or alternative, undoubtedly influence this situation of forgetting. 6 She is the one who organizes her first two individual shows in Spain in the 1970s. 7 This wise art dealer, friend of the painter and owner of the Muro gallery in Valencia, is the one who has assumed for years and with personal devotion, the restoration of Salvadó for the history of art. 8 In 2002, Bonet organized the most important public exhibition of Jacinto Salvadó to date, at the Reina Sofía National Museum in Madrid, of which he was director at the time. much more difficult than it may seem. The irrefutable proof is that there are many artists, big and small, who stopped painting. Some due to laziness, such as Sebastian del Piombo (1485-1547),⁹ the majority because they left early¹⁰ and others because they completely delegated their

workshop¹¹ to apprentices or assistants. On the other hand, there are those who, like Picasso and Salvadó, painted until their last breath.¹² If I bring up the genius from Malaga, it is for two reasons: first, because he is one of the few who has been allowed to change his style without pay tribute for it. And it may be precisely this, the style, or rather the lack of it, of a unitary style, one of the causes that has dislocated Jacinto for so long in official historiography. Very few painters are allowed to roam freely through painting without being crucified for it —ask Philip Guston (1913-1980)!¹³—, because, as the actor Benicio del Toro said in Basquiat's film (Jualian Schanbel, 1996),¹⁴ “for tTo be successful you will always have to do the same thing”. And Jacinto Salva- ————— 9

After being appointed by Pope Clement VII chancellor of the bulls of lead, with the economic benefits that this entails, Sebastián del Piombo simply stops painting. As we can read in one of his letters: “Having enough to survive, I have thought about not working anymore. In our days there are men who do in two months what it took me two years, and if I were to live a long time, I would soon realize that everything that it is possible for me to do in painting has already been done. Since there are others who do so much, it would be good for one at least to do nothing, to leave everything to them.” ¹⁰ There are many studies in this regard, but almost all indicate that today the vast majority of painters, and artists in general, abandon professional creative practice and also as a private habit, before the age of 40. ¹¹ I am not going to address in a single briefly notes a question as complicated as the artisanal authorship of the work, insofar as it has been questioned since Duchamp, and not before. For this reason, this comment is not about contemporary artists who produce paintings but openly admit that they do not paint them. With this subsection I point out the painters who pass off works painted entirely by others as their own. On this subject there is a very interesting letter from Peter Paul Ruben to Sir Dudley Carleton. This letter is a list of some paintings for sale, in which Rubens indicates the price, size and, above all, very concisely, whether the painting was painted by him or by his apprentices. See *Letters from Great Artists*, vol. I. (Richard Friendenthal, 1963). ¹² One of Picasso's great merits is how, despite the overwhelming success and fame he achieved, he painted as long as he could and as his age allowed. It did not matter to him that the pictures of old age were obviously painted by an old man with the pulse of an old man, like the portrait of Jacqueline, now on display in the permanent collection of London's Tate Modern, *Nude Woman with Necklace* (1968).

¹³ American painter who, after achieving fame as an abstract expressionist, switched to the new figuration at the end of the sixties. Although at the time he was harshly criticized and even branded a traitor —what an absurd thing for art— it has been this last and magnificent work that has given him the place he now occupies in history. ¹⁴ Benicio del Toro plays here a Chicano artist, friend of Jean Michel, named Benny Dalmau. For what he gave, he always did what he wanted; and second because, for better or for worse,¹⁵ Pablo Picasso has been one of the most influential figures in the figure of Salvadó. Not in his person or in his work, but in his name, in his memory, in his place in the books. Until his restoration as a name to be reckoned with by the Spanish Paris school, Jacinto was better known for being the model of a famous harlequin painted by Picasso and exhibited at the Pompidou Center in Paris, than for his own paintings. . More named for the anecdote than for the sweat poured on his works. Because this is, after all, what is important, or rather, these, in the plural, the paintings, his paintings. And it is that despite the fact that he has begun by briefly enumerating some of his adventures, a painter is not for what he lives or does not live, for the number of well-known names that he can put on the list, for a biography, but for how he is capable of filtering, transforming, and capturing their experiences, whatever they may be, in their painting. As a technique, idea and spirit are objectified in the work of art. That is why

we must respect a work that so well faces the judgment of time that it is, without a doubt, the last court. A painting with hits and misses, with achievements and failures, but which openly challenges all those who wanted to displace it from a place in our memory. Most critics agree that his most successful work is the one he made when he reached old age, in the 70s. Blessed old age for him. An abstract work, acrylic —what a fit for the times!—, mineral but also organic. A work that leads many to another work, to other painters, but as Balthus said: "a painter uses a brush and another too, therein lies the influence."¹⁶ Of course, Salvadó, as a good traveler and a good artist, always had his eyes were open and he decided to drink openly everything he found in his path, distilling pictures that always had something of that and a little of the other. But always endowing his work with its own entity. A personality that finally forges beyond its maturity, in the wise years, at the end of the road, leaving behind a pictorial series that enters in its own right in that chain of knowledge and experience that human beings call culture, and, more specifically in this case, in the history of painting.

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