

## Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

**Artist:** Antoni Tàpies  
**Title:** *Galerie Maeght, Paris*  
**Medium:** limited edition exhibition poster designed by the artist

b. 1910, Barcelona d. 1985, Barcelona

Antoni Tàpies was a Spanish Catalan painter, draughtsman, printmaker and sculptor. From an early age he was exposed to cultural and intellectual pursuits, which developed his keen interest in the arts. During the Spanish Civil War (1936–9), Tàpies taught himself to draw and paint. In 1942, while recovering from an illness he produced several pictures, clearly influenced by van Gogh and Picasso with his use of thick impasto. In 1944 he began studying law but eventually abandoned his studies to immerse himself in his art.

Tàpies initial works were both figurative and abstract. The former concentrated on strangely proportioned human figures, with the face completely dominating the composition. To enhance the textural qualities of paint, he mixed ground white chalk and pigment into the oil medium and used *grattage* to create striking contrasts on the surface. His early abstract works were generally collage-based, often incorporating fragments of newspaper and other materials traditionally considered to be outside the realm of painting. These works established Tàpies' international reputation, as an innovative painter and talented young artist.

In 1948 the movement DAU AL SET was founded by a group of artists, including Tàpies, influenced by the Surrealists and the Dadaists. During this period Tàpies created monstrous, deformed beings, posed in erotic situations or displaying controversial religious attitudes. His use of colour, light and shadow all contributed to the atmospheric effects of these works. Following this period, Tàpies dedicated himself completely to the exploration of materials. His increasingly austere use of mixed-media saw him restrict his palette to neutral hues, while also adding crushed marble to his paints to produce a material density and coarseness. He used similar sensitivity in the materials he used as a printmaker, particularly in etchings and aquatints which stressed the physicality of the inked lines and surfaces.

Tàpies briefly flirted with Pop art in the 1960s but his subsequent interest in Zen philosophy led him to produce conceptual installations and objects that revealed the aesthetic of a meditative emptiness. He also produced free-standing sculptures and monumental relief during this time.

Information contained in this article is from The Modern Art Collection Trinity College Dublin (David Scott 1989), [www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com)