

Artworks from Elsa Peretti's Private Collection featured in the exhibition "Joan Gardy Artigas, the rebellious hand" at Fundació Vila Casas in Catalonia

"Joan Gardy Artigas, la mà rebel" (Joan Gardy Artigas, the rebellious hand) is the title of the exhibition organized by Fundació Vila Casas in Can Mario, Palafrugell (Girona) until November 24, 2024. The exhibition, curated by Ricard Bru, pays tribute to the work of the renowned artist and friend of Elsa Peretti, Joan Gardy Artigas (born in 1938) who worked with some of the leading artists of the twentieth century, from Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró to Alberto Giacometti and Marc Chagall. His work, which dates back to the late 1950s, explores the boundaries between sculpture and ceramics, monumental sculpture, as well as lithography, engraving, painting and drawing, creating stylized sculptures on human and animal forms. The works are never abstract, they are grounded in reality and approach the poetic synthesis of anatomy and organic and natural models. The origin lies in the observation that there is nothing more defined than bones and skeletons, which for Artigas are what support us and allow us to interact with the world. This concept is reminiscent of Elsa Peretti's biomorphic creations, based on forms found in nature, which allude to Peretti's connection between pure artistic creativity and the forms that arise in reality. While Joan Gardy Artigas worked the volume of his ceramics in a sculptural manner, in the same way Elsa Peretti, through her artisanal technique, explored the plasticity of lines, volumes and textures to transform her jewellery designs into symbolic forms.

The large exhibition presents a hundred of works – ceramics, paintings, sculptures and bronzes – from the 1950s to the present day, including two sculptures on loan from the **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation**, which is in charge of preserving Elsa

Peretti's Private Collection. "Quimera" (1988) made of refractory sandstone and adorned with an emerald set in its eye, was particularly dear to Elsa Peretti, who placed it in the dining room of Casa Pequeña in Sant Martí Vell, where it is preserved today. The relationship between the sculpture "Relleu" (n.d.) and Elsa Peretti's first design is also fascinating, as both are related to the bottle shape. "Quimera" and "Relleu" are examples of the deep friendship between Elsa Peretti and the Artigas family, which began in the 1960s, when Elsa Peretti arrived in Barcelona. Joan Gardy Artigas's son, Isao Artigas, recalled in 2023: *"We have always been friends and Elsa always helped us a lot, because she was a great supporter of the artists. Elsa always bought our works of art and whenever there was an exhibition she always tried to acquire something, because she liked it and my father helped her choose. Throughout her life she has collected many of my father's works"*.

"Thought her life Elsa has collected many of my father, Juan Gardy Artigas's ceramics, drawings, sculptures, and vice versa, since my father always bought Elsa's designs.

They were great fans of one another! Elsa had an exquisite taste; she knew how to differentiate between what was worth and what wasn't. When she liked something, somebody did, she made it clear, she had a fantastic collection with exceptional pieces."

Isao Artigas

2023