

‘To and From the Landscape / Landscape as the Mind’s Eye’

By **ANATXU ZABALBEASCOA**

This itinerary leads along a path that runs from back to front and from the outside in. It travels through time and through the aspirations of the different artists. It follows the evolution – or rather the development – of painting. And it concludes with a return to nature by the featured artists. Along the way, then, we will see changes in form and in position, living alterations and personal transformations; we will see how nature is changed by the human gaze, and how artists, as humans, become aware that they belong to nature and portray the landscape from close up.

Our journey begins with a background. In the mid-16th century triptych by Dutch painter Joos van Cleve, what we are interested in is not the biblical scene of the Adoration of the Magi, but rather the backdrop. Van Cleve (also known as Joos van der Berke) had a successful career in Antwerp, where he ran a studio with five assistants, before his death in around 1541. Among the artists with whom Van Cleve worked was Joachim Patinir, and it was very probably under his influence that Van Cleve became one of the first artists to introduce landscapes taken from the real world – rather than mere backgrounds – in order to bring depth to his paintings. It is this feature, which was to become a standard formal technique amongst Renaissance painters in northern Europe, that we wish to concentrate on here. The figures in the foreground – the Baby Jesus, the Virgin Mary, St Joseph and the Three Magi (including an exotic-looking Balthazar with a dog on the right) frame the landscape, glimpsed through the archway of the central panel, fading into the distance in lush and apparently boundless natural surroundings. The triptych in the Banco de España Collection is a smaller, more tightly framed version of a similar painting in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples. In this one, Balthazar is hemmed in, while in the other painting, apparently painted from further away, it is the landscape that predominates. The ruins are the same, but the castles and pine trees are different. In the Capodimonte triptych, the Magi are inside the dwelling, but both they and the Holy Family seem somehow to have stepped out into the landscape. In our painting, however, the scene has, surprisingly, been domesticated. The architecture is still framed by the same landscape, but here it is made up of ruins. Now we can see a church; this is not a place of passage, but a refuge for the Holy Family.

Moving to the France of the next century, we can see in the paintings of Pierre Patel that landscape was no longer merely a backdrop. Just as Van Cleve had been influenced by Patinir, Patel drew on the serene, classical landscapes of Claude Lorrain. Amid the classical ruins, nature symbolises stillness but also the quest for an ideal. Perhaps, too, there is a less deliberate element of contrast. Patel painted large-scale scenes (including an aerial view

showcasing the splendour of the Palace of Versailles and its gardens) and used small details to build big. In the painting in the Banco de España collection, all the human figures are clustered in the bottom right-hand corner: the apostles, plucking ears of grain as the Pharisees reproach them for breaking the Sabbath, and Christ responding that their cup is cleaner on the outside than the inside. This arrangement turns the leafy path running diagonally across the picture into the protagonist of the scene. And it symbolises hope.

Vicente Giner was born in Castellón and studied in Valencia, the nearest centre of learning. Despite entering the priesthood, he was first and foremost a painter, although his clerical calling may explain why he subsequently moved to Rome, where he died in 1681. A year before his death, he joined a group petitioning the Spanish Ambassador, Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, for an academy of Spanish artists in Rome, along the lines of the French model. King Charles II of Spain, however, felt that the expense could not be justified and the project did not come to fruition until the end of the nineteenth century during the First Republic, under the premiership of Nicolás Salmerón. I myself was fortunate enough to study at the academy and it is a thread running through this itinerary; many Spanish artists learned their trade in the golden light of Rome.

Giner was more meticulous in painting form than background. His landscapes are stony and the sky is barely visible amidst the minute detail of his Roman *palazzi*. He was more interested in the grandeur of life than the memory of the ruins. Some scholars believe that he may have painted staffage for Viviano Codazzi, an expert in architectural perspectives, whose *capricci*, unlike Giner's, are cocooned amidst the pine trees and natural surroundings. Giner specialised in monumental compositions and many of the churches and palaces he painted seem intended to cover over the natural features and accentuate the cityscape of Rome. In this regard, *Perspective with Porch and Garden*, in the Banco de España collection is unusual. Although the natural surroundings have been displaced to the background, from which our eye is drawn, in doing so – and by means of the encroaching cypress trees – Giner clearly expresses the contemporary notion of the city, defined *in opposition to* nature. Nature surrounds the city and (echoing a long-held belief) also appears to be threatening it.

During the sixteenth century, the Low Countries came to feel increasingly alienated following Emperor Charles V's abdication in favour of his son Philip II, who was unable to address them in their own language, as his father had. Following the persecution of the emerging Calvinist movement in the region, in 1568, the seventeen provinces of what are today the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg rebelled against the Spanish crown, triggering the Eighty Years' War. Although the resulting Golden Age of the seventeenth century saw a flourishing in all fields – from group portraits to the birth of science – the painters of the time tended to concentrate on what was clearly their forte, landscape. It was in this context, and following the provinces' eventual victory and emergence as the most prosperous region in Europe, that a love of the local landscape blossomed, which was reproduced in the paintings of the time. Dutch painters were astute merchants; rather than

painting on commission, they anticipated market demand. As a result, their paintings were small and domesticated. This *Landscape with Carts at a Ford* is reminiscent of the group of landscape artists, including Jacob van Ruysdael and his brilliant pupil Meindert Hobbema, whose woodland scenes would ultimately influence the animal painters, who created a naturalism that was more quotidian than fantastical, placing greater importance on farm animals and everyday scenes than the silvery naturalism of their masters. The dark foliage and the foreshortened perspective of the path draws our eye to the everyday conveyance of the cart.

With the Romantics, we see a new shift. No longer is landscape a means of speaking about people; rather it becomes a metaphor for a mood or aspiration. In his depictions of the most extreme natural features, nineteenth-century artist George Elgar Hicks was describing humanity rather than landscape. For this Victorian artist, mountains were not places, but representations of difficulty; fog was not a meteorological phenomenon but a symbol of uncertainty. All about are ruins. There are no human figures and yet it is the solitude of the human soul that Hicks is attempting to depict.

At his father's behest, Hicks studied medicine, before finally summing up the courage to abandon his studies and take up art at the Royal Academy. He had eight children in seven years and, despite his talent, he complained that he did not have not enough time to be anything but a minor artist. He gained some acclaim painting scenes from everyday life, a subject in which no one else had shown an interest, apart from Hick's master, William Powell Frith, and, of course, William Hogarth over a century before. Today, his *Woman's Missions: Comfort of Old Age, Companion of Manhood* and *Guide to Childhood* may seem retrograde, but they accurately summarise the values of the time and we should bear this part of his oeuvre in mind when assessing the importance of a landscape that seems more a state of mind than a place. In 1850, when he painted this work, Hicks was twenty-six years old and had four children; he was feeling overwhelmed. He had just embarked on a career as a painter and was still finding his way. He had not yet opted for portraiture and scenes of daily life. And one gets the impression that he felt out of his depth. He wrote of these feelings, but this solitary landscape is clear evidence that he also reflected them in his art.

And so we come to Spain and its luxuriant landscape. Santiago Rusiñol was more of an observer than a thinker. Coming a little later than Hicks (he was born in Barcelona in 1861), Rusiñol was the son of a wealthy family of Catalan textile manufacturers. This enlightened middle-class Renaissance man threw himself enthusiastically and energetically into literature and collecting before finding his niche in painting. At the age of twenty-three, he began to write on art for the *La Vanguardia* newspaper and one of his paintings was included in a group exhibition at the Sala Parés — a rural landscape in the naturalist style that may well have been very similar to the one we see here.

At that moment, something changed in his life. He renounced his inheritance and his family obligations, and moved away. He travelled. For his first solo show, he painted the landscape of the Garrotxa region of Girona. Here again, the landscape reflects more a personal need than an actual place.

He shared a succession of garrets in Paris with Ramón Casas, Zuloaga, Clarasó and Utrillo, where his rural naturalism developed into intimate naturalism. However, it is always difficult to affix the boundary between what his art says about the place and what it says about his inner quest. Finally, after depicting the harsh precariousness of life in *The Morphine Addict*, he found his subject in the natural surroundings of gardens, in Granada, Mallorca, Aranjuez, Girona, Cuenca, Tivoli and Frascati. He almost always depicted these gardens empty, and sometimes abandoned.

And so we come to a friend of Rusiñol's, the great Ramón Casas, a painter who saw beyond the elements in front of him. Above all, he saw beyond himself. By the time he painted the road we see here, he had already returned from Paris (he left home at the age of fifteen, having already founded the legendary *L'Avenç* magazine). It would be another seven years before he and his friends Rusiñol, Utrillo and Pere Romeu were to set up the legendary *Els Quatre Gats* café where they sought to emulate *Le Chat Noir* in Paris by holding artistic soirées (Casas painted a memorable portrait of Romeu and himself astride a tandem). They were just 'four cats' (a small group), but they laid the foundations of the Art Nouveau movement in Spain that preceded modernism. In this landscape, he cautions us on the dangers of progress. He was a nature painter and his fear of an unknown future is clearly evident. The natural surroundings sit alongside the dust and cables of modernity. The painting depicts everything that is slipping out of our hands, in a transformation that could, in fact, be set anywhere.

Ignacio Zuloaga (who lived with Casas and Rusiñol and was a friend of Gauguin, Bernard and Degas) had also spent time in Paris. Indeed, he had already returned twice, having first spent time in Rome. Unlike his Spanish friends, Zuloaga came from a family of artists. He was brought up in Éibar and had learnt his trade at Kontadurekua, the family's large house-cum-workshop. He was thirty years old. Now he had returned from Seville, where he had been happy living in a shared *corral* in Alcalá de Guadaíra. He travelled with Rusiñol around Spain and while the latter concentrated on gardens, Zuloaga – who drew his portraits with great precision – hurried off this harsh, distant view of Madrid on one of his trips to or from his Uncle Daniel's ceramic workshop in Segovia. Zuloaga was a bold cosmopolitan and was appointed by the republican government to be director of the Modern Art Museum. He himself was apolitical and most of his friends were republican, but when civil war broke out, he chose to side with Franco's forces.

Julio González was barely twenty-five years old when he painted this watercolour. In it, he focuses on the tree trunk, seeking to extend the dimensions of the paper. González painted what he saw. He observed by analysing, like a scientist scrutinising a subject in order to understand it. Sketched in charcoal and almost sap-like watercolours, the painting documents González's tentative, laborious move from two to three dimensions. Slowly he drew out the elusive freedom. The faint lines used to draw the creeper embracing the trunk, rounding it off and highlighting it, give us a hint of the path that would lead him, over two decades later, to become one of

Spain's leading sculptors.

Olivares celebrated Paris. He was a diplomat by profession, but such was the energy and the enthusiasm of the city that he became, as if by contagion, an artist. He learned to observe and he chose cubism because there he found freedom. He experimented more by instinct than by training. His work is an urban landscape, a postcard of emotion, a discovery of the world and all the opportunities life offers for change and progress. Like a poster announcing the future or selling a glamorous dream, his *Paris* sums the place up in a single graphic gesture of light and dark. It is the portrait of a change.

Nearly half a century later, scarcely any of that Parisian promise had made its way to Castile. Nonetheless, the reality is more palpable than imaginable. Cubism had left its mark without erasing the sense of place. It touched this landscape, built almost entirely of a single colour, which, like the ochre Castile or the off-white furrows of the artist's paintings in the Reina Sofía, seem almost to have been constructed rather than painted. Joaquín Vaquero Palacios was not merely a painter, but also an architect working on large-scale engineering projects. He designed five power stations in Asturias, where he also painted. He learned to paint in Rome, where all his views appear to be lit by a 12-watt bulb and any delirium is interred in an orange hue.

Thereafter, that deep yellow and broad horizontality were etched on Vaquero Palacios's retina. In this landscape, it makes the clouds of the Castilian skies weigh heavy on the ground. It is a vision of microworld and macroworld at the same time. The painter may tell us he is depicting the aerial – the clouds – but this landscape breaks free from the gaze, seeking to be everything. Palpable, it is both proximate and overwhelming. One might say that is a sort of figurative abstraction. There is horizon, there is depth and there is also distance. There are two dots that might be two people, but what is striking is the *now*: the shadows of the clouds, the ethereal become worldly.

Vaquero Palacios's landscape – at once seeming to weigh down and to break free – stands in stark contrast to Carmen Laffón's painstaking approach to constructing a view. In her portraits of Queen Sofía of Spain and Luis Ángel Rojo, Governor of the Banco de España, she almost paints over her sitters. Here she tames the landscape of Seville from the vantage point of a terrace, dividing it up into rooftops. In front of the railing are some white jasmine flowers, perhaps picked by the artist for use as a sweet-scented clasp. They lie in a small pile, still fresh. Laffón took a great deal of time to paint what was actually just an instant in time. She was no rebel artist, nor did she need to be. Her parents had met at the student hall of residence. Carmen herself was home schooled. She began painting and at the age of fifteen began a degree in art. When she was twenty, she travelled to Paris and later moved to Rome. But she always came home to the family house overlooking Doñana National Park. Although not a rebel, she was an artist of the resistance. She specialised in domestic scenes painted in a realist style; unlike most of her friends and contemporaries, she was never lured towards the abstract. She was discreet, observant and meticulous; at most, she erased. And what she removed from her portraits, she highlighted in her landscapes, in the painstaking detail of her architectural drawing. She never gave up life drawing, which she also taught. Her maiden speech to the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* was entitled 'Vision of a Landscape'. And she travelled to Seville, to Sanlúcar de Barrameda, to her childhood and to the Guadalquivir River. And perhaps to

the unforgettable fragrance of a childhood steeped in jasmine.

From the rooftops of Seville to an imagined landscape. Imagination always portrays more ambition than reality, and ultimately that is why it ends up being so real. Pancho Cossío was familiar with Rothko's *Color Field* and the irreverence of William Turner. What Laffón blurred, Cossío erased. When only shadows, impasto and greens are left, a curved stroke is the part of something that makes an object (or a person) emerge. As is the small graphic gesture that propels the imagination. In this landscape, a sandy seascape becomes a disconcerting place where everything seems to disappear... or to be in the process of appearing. Pancho Cossío worked with sand. There is no more artisan way of painting a landscape, even if it is a seascape, even if the artist's aim is to portray movement. The sandstone means that that movement is slight, as if determined by the wind.

Cossío arrived at movement from stillness. He was born in Cuba, but when he was still a child, he returned with his parents to their native Cantabria. Cossío was one of those artists who learned their trade during a long convalescence, in the calm of an enforced rest. He began painting still lifes after a serious accident, in which his leg was injured. He moved to Paris, which transformed his style, and by 1925 the precise subject of his paintings was already difficult to identify. It is the person observing the work and the artist who devised and painted it who provide the interpretation. A devotee of the Falangist movement and a support of Franco's uprising, Cossío painted almost nothing during the Civil War. Subsequently, however, he was to gain considerable renown in Madrid, swapping abstraction for post-cubism. Post-cubism was in reality more of a style than a movement; in it we can see the traits of the great cubist artists, which the post-cubists employed to give form to the elements rather than deconstruct and analyse them. Cossío's landscape of boats and beaten sand effaces all that, augmenting the element of suggestiveness. It proposes rather than dictating. And it allows us to guess.

There is a long road from Cossío to Ortega Muñoz. And Ortega Muñoz journeyed the world before returning home. One of the great Spanish landscape artists, the movement or way he looked, rather than his style, appear to have restricted his works to the scenery with which he was familiar in Spain. Indeed, there have been few more cosmopolitan painters, living as he did in Paris, Turin, Geneva, Rome, Cairo, Athens, Constantinople, Oslo, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki. After exploring Italy, Ortega journeyed around the Mediterranean and beyond before returning home. He combined a succinct and stark essential way of working with a vision of calm and of the horizon.

Ortega's mother died when he was still a child. He taught himself art by copying pictures at the Prado. Later, he went out into the countryside to paint. By the age of twenty, he was living in Paris and at twenty-one he was in Turin. However, post-war Paris did not hold the same appeal as it had at the turn of the century, and Ortega moved to Italy, staying there for a further six years. He travelled constantly, and just as often returned home. By the age of thirty-five, he had already developed his own 'eye' and his own style of painting. His infinite, ordered and somewhat naïve fieldscapes trod a fine line between tradition and avant-garde. He returned home to paint and the serenity of his landscapes, the rural world, unprejudiced and uncomplicated, have found their way around the world.

Benjamín Palencia came from a modest background. The ninth of eleven children, he moved with his parents from Albacete to Madrid. When he was fifteen, he began to copy paintings at the Prado and at the age of twenty-one he attracted the attention of Juan Ramón Jiménez. He began by painting Castilian landscapes, full of protest, akin to the *Generation of '98*. On meeting Lorca, Alberti and Bergamín, he turned to surrealistic zoomorphic forms and for a time he lived in Paris. However, it was war, and his trips to the countryside near Madrid that were to make him the great landscape artist he became. He founded the 'Vallecas School' twice: first with Alberto Sánchez (with whom he would go to paint *en plein air* before the Spanish Civil War) and later with his students in the 'Second Vallecas School'. Eventually, he withdrew to a village in the province of Ávila – first with his close friend, Rafael López Egáñez, who provided support and assistance throughout his life, and later with his assistant Serafín. This picture was painted during the final decade of his life, by which time his painting had become schematic. The cypresses seem to be trying to break free from abstraction. Or perhaps, on the contrary, they are expanding to achieve that abstraction. It is the place that really counts. We know that the day is overcast from the shadow cast by the clouds. Everything is succinct, schematic, synthetic, composed of those radical brush strokes that would come to be called 'Iberian Fauvism'.

Two years later, the Castilian landscape continued to expand on the canvases of many painters, becoming ever more straw-coloured and more geometric. The clusters of houses forming the villages of the *meseta* begin to become distorted, broken down into unintelligible geometries. These scenes come very close to abstraction, with touch speaking louder than sight.

In his latter years, Juan Manuel Díaz-Caneja painted an enigmatic landscape; tight, dry and straw-coloured, it could be a stone wall. Yet these fields, viewed from above, could also be in Castile, with vast estates intersected by smallholdings and wheat fields standing alongside fallow land. With his bird's eye view, the painter seems to stand shoulder to shoulder with the architect he was becoming. He could also recover his own version of the cubism that he discovered in Paris as a young man and which occupied many years of his adulthood. Within these boundaries we see too the landscapes he sought out under Palencia and Sánchez's guidance, in *plein air*, at the Vallecas School. The painter takes many forms in this picture, but so too does the landscape. The Castilian countryside could be close and very far. It could be a quasi-geometric abstract work and it could be figurative. To speak of the Castilian landscape could mean almost anything. And that is what it is: a whole, a microworld of golden yellow hues. Díaz-Caneja painted a great deal and at the same time, increasingly less – that is to say, his many paintings became ever more simple and abstract.

A communist and a republican, Díaz-Caneja initially saw the landscape as a way of learning and later as a means of avoiding censorship. Imprisoned for his Republican sympathies, he continued to paint during the three years he spent in the prisons of Ocaña and Carabanchel. He returned from Paris as a cubist, but he went back to the landscape. And in that rediscovery, he simplified and synthesised it at the end of his life.

If we were to remove nearly all the lines from one of Díaz-Caneja's late landscapes, then what we would have would be Ràfols-Casamada's *Yellow Sea*. Like Díaz-Caneja, Ràfols-Casamada studied architecture before turning his back on the profession. He too lived in Paris, and like Díaz-Caneja, he took

the road towards simplicity – though in this case from an abstract starting point. Ràfols-Casamada might be said to have primarily painted colours, as evidenced by the titles of his works: *Red Aurora*, *Deep Blue*, *White Interior*, *Central Blue*, *Grey Sea*, *White Landscape* and *The Colour of Stones*. And, like those works, this *Yellow Sea* is also a colour. We only know that it is the sea because the painter tells us so. Ràfols-Casamada makes us believe that he has seen a yellow sea. Indeed, he goes further: he makes *us* see it. For Ràfols-Casamada, colour spoke where the subject remained silent. He knew how to converse with it.

Many painters have followed the path traced by Laozi (also rendered as Lao Tzu or LaoTse) from the supposedly fluid values of the feminine to the roughness of the masculine. The reasoning of the Chinese philosopher is difficult to question, and can be summed up in the notions of Yin and Yang – a juxtaposition of opposites that explains the universe in a recognition of the other as part of oneself. Hernández Mompó was obsessed with the understanding that fluidity – that is to say, change – is the essence of nature and that the opposite is impossible, because what is permanent is death. In his final works, he turned his paintings almost into spaces, adding height to them. The picture here, *Participating in Nature*, explains this idea. The whiteness blinds and shrouds; it acts as a filter, letting very little through, just a few signs representing what we seek as viewers. These landscapes are more personal than real, more mental than physical.

Valencian by birth and Madrilenian by adoption, Hernández Mompó was a unique painter, one of those artists who was capable of creating not just his own stamp, but his own language. He studied in Valencia and then continued to learn his trade in Paris and in Rome, where he attended the Spanish Academy of Fine Arts. He began by painting street scenes and places, gradually becoming more abstract and introspective. He placed ever greater importance on the white light of the Levante, until it eventually became a watery grey film. In the piece in the Banco de España Collection, it is this tenuous colour that expands nature.

After all the introspection and contemplation required by the abstract works in this selection, we trust the reader will find the next encounter refreshing. The three pieces of wood that make up Perejaume's unpatterned picture are almost an *objet trouvé*. We see a landscape, but the artist tells us that what we are looking at is *Tres fustes* - three pieces of wood. Ràfols-Casamada, made us believe that the sea is yellow, that he had seen it like that and so would we. By contrast, Perejaume does not imagine, but nonetheless manages to foster our imagination.

It has been hard to select just one work by this artist, born in Sant Pol de Mar, with which to illustrate the contemporary landscape. For example, the Banco de España Collection also hosts his *Double Landscape*, a playful and imaginative piece in the style of Brossa, depicting an infinite space distilled in a curve. It can be hung either way up, at the buyer's whim and to this end, the artist has signed and dated it, in reverse directions, at the top and bottom. The artist opens the door and the game begins. The rest is up to the observer.

This micro-landscape consists of three pieces of wood, but it is also a mountain scene encased within the grain of the wood. Elusive, playful,

conceptual and poetic, Perejaume's art is astonishing for its audacity, not for its impact. He is a self-taught artist and his world is as much mental as sensual. He bridges the divide between the poetry he writes and the visual elements he constructs. A naturalist painter, influenced by Brossa, the central theme of his work is the scenery with which he is most familiar, the landscape of Catalonia. Rather than actually creating, Perejaume simply frames, approaches, highlights and emphasises. And then, just as he does here in this *Three Pieces of Wood*, he guides us as observers.

Tierz, one of José Beulas's most striking works, might also be a yellow sea, with its broad horizon under a leaden rain-threatening sky and the undulating plain crisscrossed by cereal-coloured hues. Beulas was born in Santa Coloma de Gramanet (Barcelona) but ended up living in Huesca, attracted by its austerity, peace and silence. There he tirelessly observed, painted and reinvented the landscape. Beulas studied in Rome (at the Spanish Academy of Fine Arts) and in Madrid on a fellowship from the Fundación Juan March. It was while he was doing his compulsory military service that he first discovered the scenery of Huesca and fell in love with the place. He got married there and eventually returned to live there. He came to know the place very well, never tiring of observing it and wishing to inhabit it. Those landscapes were the painter that he had chosen to be: strong and dry, austere, imposing and yet silent, as if whatever needed to be said could be expressed by looking. Or by painting.

Any work by Miquel Barceló is inevitably going to be audacious, probably over-the-top and certainly exceptional; it is something that can be said of very few artists. With his eye, his daring, his culture, his zest for searching and his readiness to change constantly, Barceló is capable of finding themes for his pictures in the apparently inconsequential. His landscape is not a marine horizon. We are not asked to lose ourselves in the infinite depth of the canvas. Rather, his landscapes are plain, everyday grasses and yet, they bring life closer, making it leap out of the painting. They ask for nothing, they give.

Born in Felanitx (Mallorca), Barceló was just thirteen years old when he discovered *Art Brut* in Paris. He studied in Palma de Mallorca and then in Barcelona, before wearying of formal studies and deciding to forge his own path. He discovered the Bandiagra Escarpment in Mali, an almost Matterist rock feature, which fuses with the near-desert landscape and geology, resembling one of Barceló's own paintings, which was later declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And he went to live there. By the age of thirty, he had already won the Spanish National Prize for Art; by the age of forty his work had been exhibited at the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Since then, he has divided up his time between Paris, Mali and his native Mallorca.

Barceló's *Some Grasses* from the Banco de España Collection brings a sense of harmony to nature. Jumbled together are tubers, cut fruit, roots, a large dark vertical trunk and a tuft of grass. It looks like the spoils of an outing, the outcome of a day's work, not from the open countryside, but from a forest or a grassland. The arrangement is vertical, but the artist might also be offering us a bird's eye view. The whole is not important; it is the constituent parts that

matter. Each of the grasses evokes somewhere lush and leafy. The deep green, the thick-laid paint and the almond-shaped mark on the blades of grass refer back to the most sacred, which is also the most essential and most basic.

The generation of artists that followed on from Barceló were very different. The references have changed, they depart the mainland or cluster in some small place, no matter where. They no longer champion a cause; instead their quest is a personal one. Carmen Calvo is an experimenter; although she lived and studied in Paris, neither that city nor Rome marked her path. Pop art is universal, capable of turning anything – the more mundane and trivial the better – into art. Great art may be hidden in places where it has to be sought out. And Calvo does just that. She recycles paper, twine, branches and anything she comes across, using it in her work. She is not a landscape artist, yet by painting the riverbed she crosses each morning on her way from a former market garden to the heart of the city, she depicts her day. She reconstructs the route leading from her home to the studio where she paints. And she does so with fragments – loose items, paper, twine, branches and paint. She has created a collage that shows a personal journey and portrays the artist herself in her city.

Ràfols-Casamada's yellow, Díaz-Caneja's intense tones and Beulas's grey straw all turn to gold in Carmen Pinart's hands. Another alumnus of the Spanish Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, Pinart is capable of depicting the crunch of an onion skin. With the Zurbarán-like monastical austerity she shows in her panels and canvases, Pinart explores all those items to which we have ben blinded by habit or inertia: the spectacular skin of a lemon, the shapeless form of a pear, the silken cover encasing an onion. She is still capable of being surprised by the everyday, wowed by the familiar. Perhaps this is the reason her work has always involved a process of removal. She strips paint from wooden panels to reveal what she calls the 'stub'. When she looks at a pumpkin, she is capable of focusing on the curve and going no further. To paint her sleeping daughter, it is sufficient to show the blanket covering her. And in this timeless moving *Landscape*, she paints only gold, brightness, life and ripeness. She paints the yellow that dazzles her. It is a landscape nourished and devoured by the sun.

Our itinerary ends not with a painting but a photograph – one that shows that there are other worlds and other ways – meticulous, demanding, poetic and always personal – of approaching the landscape and of understanding that a landscape is time. The Banco de España Collection includes a series by Montserrat Soto, entitled *Traces*. And in Number 12, ivy – life – envelopes architecture. It is the triumph of the apparently fragile, the ivy, over the supposedly immutable, architecture. Soto shows us that all our assumptions are wrong; it is nature that overcomes. In this itinerary we have extracted the landscape from the background and placed it centre stage; we have sought out artists in nature and tried to explore how they portray themselves by painting the landscape. And we conclude with Soto's message: it is nature that remains. Precisely because it changes. We are nature and we will also remain here, changed. There is a path that traverses the landscape and leads to abstraction. It is sometimes the path of going and sometimes the path of returning. It is, therefore, more serene than the constant perverse renewal of fashion. This path never leaves anybody behind. It is the landscape that explores the world and requires us to try to find our place within it.