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**Arte e spiritualità.
Omaggio
a Antoni Tàpies**



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Engramma

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Arte e spiritualità. Omaggio a Antoni Tàpies

a cura di

Victoria Cirlot, Ada Naval e Marta Serrano



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Contemplating the Wall

Tàpies' First Visit to the United States, 1953

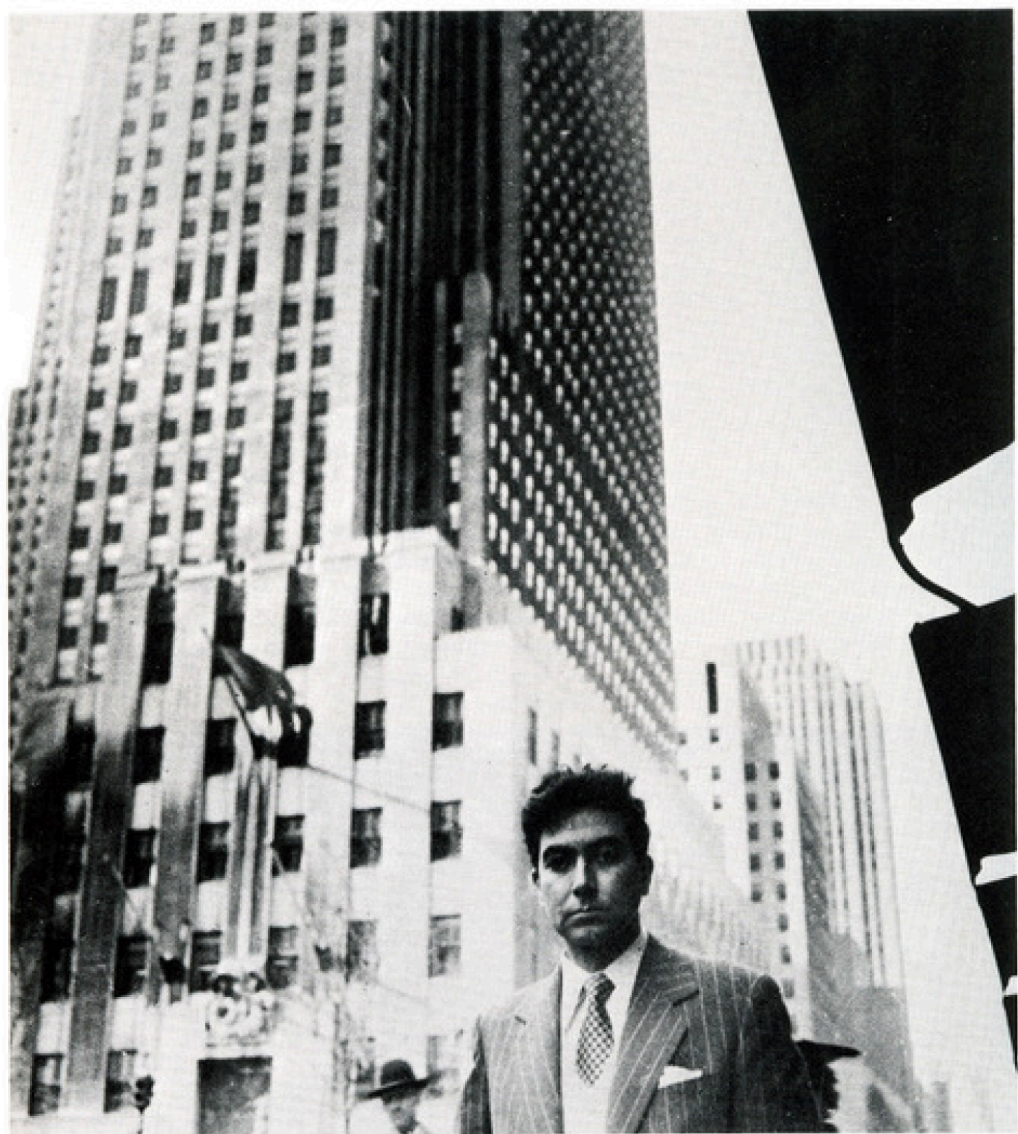
Emily Braun

I have never felt, as I did those weeks in New York, a more intense sadness, a greater despair, a more desolate and cold absence of communication. The richest city in the richest country in the world gave me the greatest sensation of poverty and pain. Taking a walk in Central Park on a Sunday afternoon, seeing here and there kids in baseball outfits, imagining the lives behind the windows of those tiny apartments, riding the subway, witnessing the street bustle of 42nd and Broadway, with its shops and stands peddling their images of mechanical and commonplace eroticism, filled me with unspeakable melancholy and loneliness.

(Tàpies 2009, 278)

On October 22, 1953, Antoni Tàpies travelled to the United States for the first time. A chapter in his memoirs, "New York: Confirmation of a Discourse" recounts the people, art, and ideas he encountered during the month-long trip and its fundamental importance to his evolution as an artist. He crossed the Atlantic on the occasion of his one-man exhibition (October 28-November 14) at the recently opened Martha Jackson Gallery. Although the same canvases had already been on view in his first American one-person show at the Marshall Field's department store in Chicago, it was the New York event and the prospect of consolidating a relationship with an American dealer that made him overcome his fear of flying and endure the eighteen-hour ordeal in a propeller plane, "stopping in Lisbon, the Azores and Boston along the way". From the airport, and speaking little English, Tàpies had to make his way by bus to the city; there he was met by Martha Jackson "very early in the morning of a gray autumn day". The chapter begins with the anxiety of this momentous journey and ends in 1958 with the triumph of the Grand Prize at the Carnegie International. That award "seemed incredible" to Tàpies when he heard the news, and, at first, he thought "it was probably a mistake" (Tàpies 2009, 275, 321-322).

Half a century of scholarship on Tàpies has acknowledged that the exposure to new American painting during his New York sojourn opened his eyes to gestural abstraction and accelerated the end of his figurative, surrealist-infused narratives. The Carnegie Prize signaled "the confirmation of a discourse", namely, the signature style of his "matter painting". What is less remarked upon are his perceptions of the United States, as represented by New York, its cultural and economic capital. First impressions are telling, beginning with the anonymity of his arrival in a mass transit hub on "a gray autumn day". Certain aspects of Manhattan's urban landscape were familiar to Tàpies from novels and movies – not the majestic skyscrapers, which he never mentions, but fire escapes seen through the confines of a window. The "brutal,



Antoni Tàpies in New York.

Antoni Tàpies' personal archive © Antoni Tàpies' heirs, Barcelona.

unstoppable developmental force” of capitalism was “overwhelming”, as was the unrelenting assault of consumerism and mass culture. “I immediately lost the European idea that each one of us, as an individual, is important”, he recalled. One might say that Tàpies hit a wall, the market-driven, spiritually vacant “American way of life” (Tàpies 2009, 277).

As is well known (and elaborated by the artist in this same chapter), the mud wall or *tàpies*, as both image and metaphor, became a constant in his work: a flat, painted plane replete with grit, graffiti, gaols, and grimness. Yet, these muted, closed-off surfaces fulfilled his “desire to provide a cosmic theme for meditation”; seemingly empty, yet filled with visual accidents and modulated light, they draw the viewer into an immersive, contemplative space. Opposites are held in productive tension. Tàpies’s confrontation with New York led to a similar voyage of discovery, one that likewise dissolved his initial two-dimensional reading of American society. Stereotypes crumbled. The “refinement and learning” of the rich collectors he meets counter “the cliché of the vulgar American who places his feet in the table”. He hears Tibetan music for the first time and notes that the United States, with its greater capacity for learning and diversity of opinions, is ahead of Europe in embracing eastern philosophy, a main inspiration for his own art. The land of ersatz culture and kitsch, he must admit, has also produced a lyrical, spiritually resonant, avantgarde art that inspired his own. In contemplating the metaphorical wall of cultural difference, he comes to realize that “America – even in those McCarthyite fifties – with all the defects and all the contradictions of capitalism, could with its wealth be a fabulous center for the conjunction of cultures. It was already a great investigative laboratory, for science as well as art. ...The riches of translations, of studies, of comparisons were spreading in America faster than in any one place” (Tàpies 2009, 292; 279; 280-281; 282).

New personal and professional relationships chipped away at his negative preconceptions: “I am grateful to many American people who received me and showed their interest in me” (Tàpies 2009, 279). Above all, one individual took care of allaying his fears, lodged him in a bed and breakfast run by Mexicans “to ease my language problems,” and “bent over backwards” to introduce him to artists, curators, and collectors: Martha Jackson, a “blonde, very kind and smiling” woman “of indefinite age”, who “dressed in a very American fashion, in bright colors” and “walked with a limp” (Tàpies 2009, 276). Jackson had her own interests in securing Tàpies’s friendship and trust. The twice-divorced, Buffalo-born heiress was embarking on a career as art dealer in New York City; she had opened her eponymous gallery in March that same year, 1953, with the aim of showing European, as well as American, contemporary art. Indeed, a work by Tàpies (*Web*), secured from a private owner, had already appeared in a group show she had mounted in May^[1]. Extensive correspondence preserved in the Martha Jackson Archives offer fascinating details of the well-considered and considerate relationship between the young artist and the novice dealer, a woman who would shape his reputation not only in the United States, but also in Europe from that year until her death in 1969^[2]. He was the first European artist she contracted and the one with whom she had the longest relationship – he became the banner figure for the internationalism she wished to project. This microhistory also lays bare “the contradictions of capitalism”, for the “venal” tasks of the art

market and commercial promotion that Jackson undertook resulted in audiences for his spiritual art – and the means for him to create it.

That Jackson came to represent Tàpies was the direct result of fortuitous cross-Atlantic connections between American museum administrators and the artist's friend and advocate, the art historian José (Josep) Gudiol Ricart. Jackson was first taken with Tàpies' work the previous autumn, when she saw two of his canvases, *Courtship and Constructions of Shah Abbas*, in the 1952 Pittsburgh [Carnegie] International Exhibition. (Tàpies had already exhibited there – his American debut – in 1950, with his *Garden of Batafra*). During the 1950s, under the directorship of Gordon Bailey Washburn, that annual exhibition (in tandem with the Venice Biennale) became key for the introduction and vetting of contemporary European art in the United States. According to Tàpies, Washburn was a good friend and “the first person to introduce me to the United States;” he also knew Gudiol. Meanwhile, Bender Kinland, Director of the Marshall Field's Galleries visited Barcelona, and after seeing Tàpies's second show at the Galeries Laietanes, arranged for thirty-two oils to be exhibited that April in Chicago, with Gudiol, serving as an intermediary. (Burg 1953; Tàpies 1989, 498). Two of the canvases belonged to Gudiol personally, Tàpies's *Self Portrait* and Tàpies's portrait of him, and were not for sale.

The Marshall Field's show generated two reviews, if few sales. Fellow artist Copeland Burg found Tàpies's dark hued paintings “fascinating” and admired his “meticulous” technique, while the critic for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* judged them “painfully realistic” and compared them negatively to “the imagination of Dalí”. It was not Tàpies's first appearance in the American press: Sebastian Gasch's 1950 article, “Non- Representational Art in Spain”, introduced the very young artist as a painter “of “occult dreams.” (Burg 1953; Gasch 1950, 91; Jewett 1953) Although Tàpies soon outgrew and later downplayed his Surrealist phase, these paintings, in the influential opinion of Washburn, were “immensely saleable and ought to have no end of success in this country. In fact, it is the kind of work that sells itself since it is highly decorative and charming and since it carries with it a delightful freshness and youthfulness. The young man is, of course, still immature, but it is likely he will develop in depth” (Letter Gordon Washburn to Lester B. Bridaham, April 1 1953). Washburn's prediction came true: in 1958, Tàpies received the First Prize for Painting in the Carnegie International. In his introduction to that catalogue, Washburn did not speak of “saleable” paintings but rather extolled the risk taking of contemporary abstract artists, who, in overcoming dualities, were embracing the spirit of Taoism and Zen Buddhism. He was the sort of enlightened American, imbued with eastern philosophy, as Tàpies came to realize, who could also exist alongside the crass world of business[3].

It was Washburn who set the wheels in motion for Jackson to become the artist's exclusive agent; they knew each other well from when Washburn served as the Director of the Albright Knox Museum in Buffalo. Even as he named Betty Parsons and Cather Viviano as other possible dealers, he pushed Jackson to Lester Bridaham of the Art Institute of Chicago, who, as it happens, was a “good friend” of Gudiol's and took it upon himself to help find an “exclusive

agent” for Tàpies in New York (Letter from Gordon Washburn to Lester B. Bridaham, April 1 1953 and Letter from Lester Bridaham to Martha Jackson, April 8 1953). Jackson soon followed up with Bridaham, visited Chicago, and started negotiating through the “red tape” to get Kinland at Marshall Field’s to send the pictures to New York, but he demurred, stating the artist wanted them all returned to Spain. (Letter from Bender Kindland to Martha Jackson, May 5 1953 [a]). The lynchpin behind the scenes was Gudiol: on May 5th he wrote (in English) to both Kinland and Bridaham stating that Tàpies had changed his mind, and paintings could be transferred to Jackson for exhibition at her gallery, save for the two portraits (Letter from Gudiol to Lester Bridaham, May 5 1953 [b]). It was likewise Gudiol who urged Tàpies to get over his reticence about the United States: “My friend Gudiol had already told me: The history of art teaches us that great works, in any given period, have always been produced in the richest centers of culture and civilization. One has to go there”(Tàpies 2009, 282).

By May 20, Jackson had corresponded to Tàpies directly with the potential terms of their agreement. Using Catherine Viviano’s arrangement with young Italian artists as a model, she explained, “we ask that paintings be sent to us on consignment, each one at a net price which would be the price the artist would receive from a European dealer” To that figure, she would add “shipping, framing, exporting, and exhibition costs”, leaving out mention of her commission for now (Letter from Marta Jackson [from now on: MJ] to Antoni Tàpies [from now on: AT], May 20 1953). With a touch of encouragement at the end, she added “We already have a small but highly enthusiastic audience in this country. We hope we can make more friends and admirers for you”. Tàpies replied on June 5th, saying that he had heard excellent things about the gallery “through our mutual friend Gordon Washburn”. After addressing various business matters, he concluded, “Trusting this relationship we are starting now will be agreeable and useful to us all, please remember that you may count on my friendship”. He signed the type-written letter “Tàpies”, with his whimsical autograph, a vertical cross for the “T”, a quarter moon flourish for the accent grave above the “a”, and small inky circle over the “i” (Letter from AT to MJ, June 5 1963). Jackson, in turn, proudly responded to his queries about the upper-east side exhibition space:

You asked for a description the Gallery. It is located between Fifth Avenue and Madison Ave on one of the best-known streets in New York. When [Winston] Churchill visited [Bernard] Baruch, he stayed a few doors away. We are within walking distance of a great many collectors. The interior consists of two galleries, approximately 11 /2 x 16 feet each. The ceilings are high. The walls are white and the lighting is the best that is made in the U.S.A. (Letter from MJ to AT, June 28, 1953).

In that same letter, Jackson asked Tàpies for a drawing to accompany the exhibition flyer and checklist; of the several he sent, she chose one akin to his densely worked, dramatic motifs for *Dau al Set*. Tàpies weighed in on the press release, pointing out that Marshall Field’s had incorrectly added his mother’s name “Puig” to his, and had erred in stating he stated he had studied with Joan Miró: “He is a good friend of mine... we are neighbors. I am a great admirer of his work. Anyway I am not entitled to use his name with [sic] publicity purposes and I think he would not like it either, Furthermore, Miró has never taught” (Letter from AT to MJ, June 27

and October 12, 1953). Jackson continued to build his confidence, noting the link between sales and success: “your paintings are completely different from any we have had in New York City, and as we are able to offer them at very good prices, your show should make a great hit” (Letter from MJ to AT September 18, 1953). On October 8th, he expressed his anxiety about traveling alone: “I am a little bit scared as I don’t know the place nor anybody there, so then I expect and trust you’ll be able to take care of me as a good sister”. He also asked to be lodged in a house with an artist or acquaintance of hers to feel more comfortable and because “it would be cheaper; you know we had no Marshall plan till lately” (Letter from AT to MJ, October 8, 1953).

The mention of world politics was pointed: just two weeks early, on September 23, 1953, Francisco Franco and Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Madrid Pact; a series of treaties allowed the US to build military bases in Spain in exchange for economic aid and a gradual end to its political and cultural sequestration. On October 20, 1953, Jackson wrote to Román de la Presilla, the Spanish Consul General in New York, to invite him to the preview as the “guest of honor. “Senor Tàpies is the first Spanish painting to exhibit here in many years”, she explained and then underscored, “By his coming and the subsequent interest in his work, he is promoting good will and understanding between Spain and America. It is customary for representatives of foreign governments to sponsor young artists of merit”. A photograph of the Consul General and the artist was quickly arranged by request “from the newspapers of Barcelona” (Letter from MJ to Román de la Presilla, October 20 1953 and October 28, 1953). None other than Gordon Washburn wrote a brief blurb for the printed checklist, describing him as a “lyric painter”, and a leading figure of the younger generation of intellectuals associated with Dau al Set. Washburn concluded by anticipating Tàpies’s unwitting role in the larger US-Spanish cultural-political agenda and an allusion, perhaps, to Franco’s particular repression of the Catalan language and traditions: “Thanks to his efforts and to his unique talent, one foresees the possibility of a renewal of the arts in Catalonia where, if in any part of Spain, the stubborn tree of life can again bear such charmed fruit”[4].

For Tàpies’s New York debut, Jackson chose eighteen of the thirty-one oils she had received from Marshall Field’s, including the two, magic realist portraits, which Gudiol ultimately agreed to lend. She also shrewdly secured the two paintings from the 1952 Carnegie, *Courtship* and *Constructions of Shah Abbas*, listing them with their owners, the collector Louisa Robins and the Albright Knox Museum, to prove that the young artist already had a following. Though not on the published checklist, she also exhibited the 1949 *Portrait of Teresa*, and had on hand a number of watercolors, drawings, on paper, and monotypes, which Tàpies brought with him. Prices ranged from \$ 225.00 to \$ 400.00, with the works on paper available for those with a smaller budget. Prepping for sales and journalists, Jackson’s press release described Tàpies’s style thus: “Colors glow from the darks as if a handful of jewels had been flung across the canvas...Mood and subject matter are important. By visual means the artist transports his audience into a realm of fantasy of his own creating”[5].

Critics likewise noted the alchemical themes, dark backgrounds, and color washes. Writing in the *New York Herald Tribune*, Carlyle Burrows heralded Tàpies as one of the most “arresting” Spanish artists since Miró and Picasso, and, despite his comparisons to the surrealism of Klee, Miró, and Dalí, typical of other commentators, found his work to be “independent of them”. All but three of the four reviewers were overall positive, conscious of the fact that they were assessing a young artist at the early stage of his career. (Ashton 1953, 20; Burrows 1953, 12; Campbell 1953, 58; Mitchell, 1953, 24). Only the artist Lawrence Campbell, critic for *Arts News*, was outright dismissive, listing Tàpies’s “obvious borrowings” from other artists, such as the “double image” from Dalí. Tàpies was so incensed by the article that he wrote a letter of protest to the magazine. It was not so much the issue of influence – all artists build on the work of other artists, he wrote:

Pero es el caso que Vd. en su crítica me acusa de us deliberarado robo de formas existentes en otros pintores, llegano al extremo de mentir, ya sea con mala intención ya sea por ignorancia, en cuyo caso Vd. no es digno de figurer entre los escritores de una revista como Art News, dando con ello una imagen completamente falsa de mi pintura a sus lectores (Letter from Antoni Tàpies to Lawrence Campbell, November 10 1953).

In retrospect, Tàpies inevitably qualified the exhibition’s success, despite the sales, because “the greater part of those works no longer represented what I was doing... My show then did not surpass mediocrity, even though I received some few, favorable reviews” (Tàpies 2009, 281-282)[6]. Yet the positive results were many, including the genuine bond that had formed between artist and dealer. They no longer addressed each other as “Mrs. Jackson” and Senor Tàpies but “Martha” and “Tony”, and personal information filled their subsequent missives. Indeed, in his first letter sent to Jackson upon his return to Barcelona that November, Tàpies informed her:

La exposición ha tenido mucha resonancia en Barcelona. Todos los periódicos han hablado poco o mucho de ella. Te adjunto los recortes de algunos. Si ha salido algún otro impreso en New York, te – ruego me lo envíes[7].... Aunque estemos tan lejos otre ves, ahora ya te tengo formendo parte de mi mundo, y soy muy feliz de var como al otro lado del Atlántico haya una tan Buena amiga mia que cuide de mia pintura a con el cariño que lo haces tu... / un fuerte abrazo... Excuse me that I write you in Spanish. My translator is ill and I want you to have my soon my letter. Also you can practice Spanish!” (Letter from AT to MJ December 3, 1953).

In the short term, Jackson placed his canvases in museum shows across the country and continued to exhibit and personally acquire and sell his recent production. Moreover, during his New York trip, Jackson had introduced Tàpies to James Johnson Sweeney, Director of the Guggenheim Museum. At her insistence, he showed Sweeney some of his gouaches and “a few days later, [he] sent me a letter full of praise and encouragement that was one of the joys of my trip” (Tàpies 2009, 282). The meeting, and Jackson’s continued friendship with Sweeney, proved pivotal. He acquired the museum’s first Tàpies, *Great Painting* (1958), and included it in the “Inaugural Selection”, the exhibition that marked the opening of the Frank Lloyd Wright building in October 1959. A year later he organized *Before Picasso: After Miró*,

which featured several works by Tàpies, as well as those by some of his peers. But of those contemporary artists, it was only Tàpies who received a major retrospective in that same museum, and soon after, in 1962. He wrote anxiously about the show to Jackson in February “This exhibition of the Guggenheim is going to be very important I think as repercussion in my country and may counteract and pull up all the campaign of envy and resentment which never stops attacking me here. Please, dear Martha, look after my interests the best you can” (Letter from AT to MJ February 4, 1962). She did: several of the Surrealist period works in this retrospective were sold from Jackson’s 1953 show. Sweeney also wrote the text for Tàpies’s 1961 exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery. Like Washburn, Sweeney was a museum director who preached the secular religion of modernism. For him, Tàpies’s art embodied the capacity for synthesis, uniting both the modernist struggle with the material and venerable Spanish traditions. This ancient notion of *coincidentia oppositorum* girded Sweeney’s writings in general, which, like Tàpies’s own, engaged in spiritual concepts and sought to overcome conformism, materialism and repression with transcendent aesthetic experience[8].

In returning to his recollections of the formative 1950s, one notes that Tàpies highlighted the spring of 1955. That year he met Michel Tapié, who not only became his critical interlocutor in Europe, but, because he also worked for the newly opened Rodolphe Stadler Gallery in Paris, assured a market there for Tàpies new ‘matter painting’. Though overlooked in the Tàpies literature, and later forgotten by the artist himself, it was none other than Martha Jackson who was personally responsible for their meeting. As he was having difficulty finding a suitable gallery in Paris, Jackson wrote to him in March, urging him to talk to Michel Tapié: “He is now my representative in Paris and I am sure he will arrange something for you and assist you”. Three weeks later, Tàpies wrote back, saying that Tapié was very interested in his paintings “I somehow feel that this gentleman could be of great help to me, and if this turns out to be so it will only have been possible thanks to your kind assistance” (Letter from MJ to AT, March 25, 1955; Letter from AT to MJ April 1, 1955; Letter from AT to MJ April 13, 1955). The timing was perfect. Stadler and Tapié included works by him in the gallery’s inaugural show in October of that year and then starting planning for Tàpies’ solo exhibition in 1956. Joining the Stadler gallery, as well as Martha Jackson’s, admitted Tàpies in A Personal Memoir, “solved the problem that I, like all artists had: of finding someone to free us from the day-to-day job of promotion. Without this help my work would remain buried at home. If we want our art to be seen everywhere – and that’s why we paint – we need an organization and an activity incompatible with our work, which needs more than anything quiet and time for reflection” (Tàpies 2009, 308)[9].

Notes

[1] *Selected Oils from the 1952 Carnegie International* (exhibition), Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, May 12-28. See the checklist, and press release, Martha Jackson Gallery Archives, University at Buffalo Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo. *The Web* was not actually in the 1952 Carnegie show (the two that were had been sold), suggesting that the one of the criteria for her group exhibition was work by artists who had been represented there. See the letter from Bender Kinland, Chicago, to Martha Jackson, New York, May 5, 1953.

[2] Tàpies continued his relationship with the Martha Jackson Gallery under the directorship of her son, David Anderson, until it closed in 1978. On the larger history of the gallery see *Wild and Brilliant: The Martha Jackson Gallery and Postwar Art*. Essay by Jillian Rosso (Taggart 2021).

[3] Gordon Bailey Washburn, "Introduction" *The 1958 Pittsburgh Bicentennial International Exhibition of Contemporary painting and Sculpture*. Catalogue, (Pittsburgh 1958), n.p. where he also opined, "since the Christian epoch of Medieval Europe, the West has never come as close to the conclusions of Eastern thought regarding the nature of reality as we now exhibit". In *A Personal Memoir*, p. 281, Tàpies adds, "It is noteworthy how I have always been affected by a special fate when it comes to things Oriental... Gordon Washburn, a friend of Martha Jackson's is today the curator of the Asia House Gallery in New York".

[4] Gordon Washburn, untitled text in *Antonio [sic] Tàpies. First Showing in New York*. Martha Jackson Gallery, October 28-November 14, 1953, "exhibition invite with checklist". Courtesy of the Martha Jackson Gallery Archives, University at Buffalo Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo.

[5] Draft press releases and draft checklists with prices and indication of sales are found in the papers relating to the 1953 exhibition, Martha Jackson Gallery Archives, University at Buffalo Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo. Prices were also listed in the press, see (Campbell 1953, 58). Although the final number of works that she sold is unclear, correspondence with Tàpies indicates that she continued to find buyers after the exhibition closed. A letter from Jackson, New York to Tàpies, Barcelona, February 10, 1954, states that she is returning twenty-four of the unsold oils from Chicago. "We could have sold more if they had not been too dark for American tests." Other letters, such as the one dated January 15, 1954 show that she is eager to have new work from him.

[6] Jackson did place several pieces in American collections (and continued to do so after the show closed). Throughout the years she also acquired many works by the artist for her personal collection and like those she sold to others, facilitated their loans to later Tàpies exhibitions.

[7] Martha Jackson Gallery Archives, University at Buffalo Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo contains one such clipping from *La Prensa* Saturday October 31, 1953, with a photograph of Tàpies gesturing toward the painting *Parafaragamus*, which was number 16 on Jackson's typewritten checklist and then titled Scarecrow on the official published one. In Agustí, *Tàpies: The Complete Works*, p. 109, it is not listed as having been exhibited in the US in 1953.

[8] The Irish-born Sweeney was, like Tàpies, raised Roman Catholic. On Sweeney's spirituality and his concept of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, see Marcia Brennan, *Curating Consciousness: Mysticism and the Modern Museum* (Cambridge 2010), especially pp. 8-27.

[9] His philosophy bears comparison to Clement Greenberg's "Avant-garde and Kitsch" of 1939, where he famously observed "No culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income. And in the case of the avant-garde, this was provided by an elite among the ruling class of that society from which it assumed itself to be cut off, but to which it has always remained attached by an umbilical cord of gold. The paradox is real". Clement Greenberg "Avant Garde and Kitsch". *The Partisan Review*, reprinted in *Idem Art and Culture: Critical Essays*, Boston, 1961, p. 8.

Appendix | Index of Correspondence preserved in Martha Jackson Gallery Archive (Buffalo)

All the related Antoni Tàpies correspondence cited in this essay is from the Martha Jackson Gallery Archives, University at Buffalo Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo. I thank Nicholas Ostness, Registrar at the University of Buffalo Art Galleries for his invaluable assistance in providing me with the access to these letters and to documents relating to Tàpies's exhibitions at the Martha Jackson Galleries. I am also grateful to Samantha Small for her research assistance.

April 1 1953

Gordon Washburn, Director, the Carnegie Institute to Lester B. Bridaham, Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Art Institute of Chicago, April 1, 1953. In that same letter, Washburn lists possible dealers and their addresses: Cadby-Birch Gallery, Martha Jackson, Mr. Kleemann [Kleemann Galleries], Catherine Viviano, Hugo Feigl, and Betty Parsons. In that same letter, Washburn lists possible dealers and their addresses, addition to Cadby-Birch Gallery, Martha Jackson, Mr. Kleemann [Kleemann Galleries], Catherine Viviano, Hugo Feigl, and Betty Parsons. In a subsequent letter of April 8, 1953, Bridaham writes to Martha Jackson, "I am in correspondence with Tàpies in Barcelona through a dear friend of mine and I am advising him of your interest in becoming his exclusive agent in the United States and I will have all the terms for your soon. I am sure that it will be very easy to turn the work over to you after the Marshall Field Exhibition".

April 8 1953

Letter from Lester Bridaham to Martha Jackson, April 8, 1953.

May 5 1953 [a]

Bender Kinland, Chicago, to Martha Jackson, New York, May 5, 1953.

May 5 1953 [b]

Letter from José Gudiol, Barcelona to Lester Bridaham, Chicago May 5th, 1953 "Dear Lester,/ It seems that it is possible to deliver Tàpies' paintings to Mrs. Jackson to be exhibited at her Gallery in New York. I am including a copy of the letter written today in regard to this point to M. Kinland. I think that Mrs. Martha Jackson ought to write a letter to A. Tàpies ... explaining the terms in which she will keep those paintings for a certain period. She must also compromise to return to Spain, at her expense, the paintings not sold. I am sorry to give you so much trouble. / With kindest regards for Dorothy and yourself..."

May 20 1953

Martha Jackson to Antoni Tàpies, May 20 1953. Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona to Martha Jackson, New York. June 5, 1953.

June 5 1953

Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona to Martha Jackson, New York. June 5, 1953.

June 27 1953

Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona to Martha Jackson, New York dated June 27.

June 28 1953

Martha Jackson, New York, to Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, June 28, 1953.

September 18 1953

Martha Jackson, New York, to Antoni Tapes, Barcelona, September 18, 1953.

October 8 1953

Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona to Martha Jackson, New York, October 8, 1953.

October 12 1953

Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona to Martha Jackson, New York dated October 12, 1953.

October 20 1953

Martha Jackson to Román de la Presilla, New York, October 20, 1953.

October 28, 1953

Martha Jackson to Román de la Presilla, New York, October 28 1953.

October 29, 1953

Letter from Román de la Presilla, New York to Martha Jackson, October 29, 1953.

November 10 1953

Letter from Tàpies, New York to Lawrence Campbell, New York November 10, 1953. The correspondence files also include Tapie's November 10 cover letter to the Art News editor, Alfred Frankfurter and a hand-written draft of the latter in English, not by Tàpies's hand. Whether or not the letter was actually sent has not been confirmed.

December 3 1953

Antonio Tàpies, Barcelona to Martha Jackson, New York, December 3, 1953.

January 15 1954

Martha Jackson to Antoni Tàpies, January 15, 1954.

February 10 1954

A letter from Jackson, New York to Tàpies, Barcelona, February 10, 1954, states that she is returning twenty-four of the unsold oils from Chicago. "We could have sold more if they had not been too dark for American tests". Other letters, such as the one dated January 15, 1953 show that she is eager to have new work from him.

March 25 1955

Martha Jackson, New York to Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, March 25th, 1955.

April 1 1955

Tàpies, Paris, Barcelona to Jackson, New York, April 1, 1955 ("I plan to go today to see Michel Tapié").

April 13 1955

Tàpies, Barcelona, to Jackson, New York April 13, 1955.

February 4 1962

Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, to Martha Jackson, New York, February 4, 1962. Sweeney had laid the ground-work for Tàpies's exhibition in the Frank Lloyd Wright rotunda, but had left the museum in 1960 and the show was organized under the new Director, Thomas Messer.

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Hollis Taggart Gallery 2021

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Washburn 1953

G.B. Washburn, untitled text in *Antonio Tàpies. First Showing in New York*, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, october 28- november 14, 1953 [printed flyer/checklis].

Washburn 1958

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“La Prensa”, 31.10.1953.

Abstract

The article examines Antoni Tàpies' first trip to New York in October 1953. All the information comes from the Martha Jackson Gallery Archives, University at Buffalo Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo. The exhibition covers the artist's impressions of his first visit to New York, as well as the contacts he made in the city, which were so decisive for his later evolution: from the first negative perceptions to those relationships which, as the artist himself acknowledged, were to contribute so much to his personal and spiritual enrichment.

keywords | Antoni Tàpies; Martha Jackson Gallery.