

CHECHU ÁLAVA

Born in 1973 Asturias, Spain

Lives and works in Paris, France.

Chechu Álava's ongoing series of female portraits bring into dialogue depictions of ancient mythological figures like Eve and Venus with prominent intellectuals, cult and feminist icons, and writers and artists of the modern and contemporary moment such as Simone de Beauvoir, Hannah Arendt, Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Sylvia Plath, Colette, Marga Gil Roësset, Niki de Saint Phalle, Eva Hesse, Tina Modotti, Frida Kahlo, and Lee Miller. In an act of reclaiming the male gaze and challenging the archetype and hierarchy presented by the male artist/female muse relationship, the starting points of Álava's works are often reinterpretations of recognisable art historical works by male artists, photography, and historic moments of gender hierarchy. A gauzy, auratic atmosphere is often offset by the directness of the subject's gaze, and as such her depictions are reminiscent of hand-coloured black-and-white photographs from the mid-20th century. Álava's portraits teeter on the edge of ghostliness amplified and unified by her soft-focus application of a palette of fleshy, pearlescent pinks and postmodern pastels. Offering up something of the otherworldly and strangely erotic, Álava's paintings combine sex and spirit to conjure the creamy, dreamy, transubstantiated flesh of saints, angels and gods in the frescoes of cathedrals. Moody and existential they are imbued with a muted tenor of unspoken intensity common to many humans who currently identify as women, whilst celebrating the shared and common positionality of womanhood across the veil of time.

Álava obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Salamanca in 1996 and was awarded the Erasmus Scholarship to study at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam in 1995. In 2020 Álava presented her first major museum exhibition, *Rebeldes*, at the Thyssen Museum in Madrid, Spain, which was accompanied by an artist's monograph. Álava's work is represented in institutions such as the Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias, DKV Art Collection Spain, the Ministry of Culture (Spain) and in private collections in Mexico, France, Colombia, Germany, Portugal, the United States, South Africa, South Korea and Spain. In 2014, her work was selected by an international jury to be included in *100 Painters of Tomorrow*, a book published by Thames and Hudson.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Eros*, Galería Alegría, Barcelona, Spain (2023); *A Timeless Story*, Cob Gallery, London, UK (2022); *L'âme et la vie*, Xippas, Paris, France (2022); *The Restless Muses*, BravinLee programs, New York, US (2021); *Rebeldes*, El Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain (2020); *Primeros Retratos*, I.E.S. Bernaldo de Quirós, Mieres, Spain (2019); *Volver a Pintar*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Gijón, Spain (2016). Recent group exhibitions include *Unfair Weather*, Lychee One Gallery, London, UK (2021); *Pintura en las venas*, Museo Barjola, Gijón, Asturias, Spain (2020); *The Female Line*, Smac Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa (2019); *Las formas del alma*, Instituto Cervantes, Rome, Italy (2019); *100 Painters of Tomorrow*, Beers Contemporary Gallery, London, UK (2014).

EDUCATION

1991-96 Graduated in Fine Arts, University of Salamanca

1995 Erasmus at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Amsterdam

1995 Seminar "Hypercritical Attitude" coordinated by the lecturer and art critic Fernando Castro Flórez Municipal Foundation of Culture, Education and People's University of Gijón

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 *Eros*, Galería Alegría, Barcelona, Spain

2022 *L'âme et la vie*, Xippas, Paris, France

2022 *A Timeless Story*, Cob Gallery, London, UK

2021 *The Restless Muses*, BravinLee programs, New York, US

2020 *REBELDES*, El Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain *

2019 *Primeros Retratos*, I.E.S. Bernaldo de Quirós, Mieres, Spain

2016 *Volver a pintar*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Gijón, Spain

2013 *Souvenir*, Nueveochenta Gallery, Bogotá, Colombia

2013 *Sisters*, Galería Utopía Parkway, Madrid, Spain

2012 *Arte Santander Art Fair* (solo booth), Espacio Líquido, Santander, Spain*

2011 *The Romanov*, Triple Base Gallery, San Francisco, USA

2011 *El hilo de Ariadna*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Gijón, Spain

2010 *Exhibition of Emerging Art*, NEXT Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Chicago, US

2009 *Le temps perdu*, Utopía Parkway Gallery, Madrid, Spain

2008 *Los placeres y los días*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Gijón, Spain

Cob.

2004 *La vida breve*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Gijón, Spain
1999 *No estaba muerta, estaba de parranda*. (In praise of painting), Borrón Showroom, Oviedo, Spain
1995 *Paintings and Drawings*, Municipal Cultural House of Avilés. Asturias, Spain

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 *Fancy Selfies. Autodérision, troubles & dévoilements*, Zoo Galerie, Nantes, France
2022 *ARCO International Art Fair*, Galería Alegría, Madrid, Spain
2022 *Una Historia del Arte reciente. 1960-2020*, A project of DKV Collection and Juan March Foundation
2022 Museu Fundación Juan March, Palma de Mallorca, Spain
2022 *En busca del tiempo judío de Proust*, Centro Sefarad Israel, Madrid, Spain
2022 *ART PARIS Contemporary Art Fair*, Xippas Galery, Paris, France
2022 *Intimacy*, Rafael Pérez Hernando Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2022 *Sin cerraduras, Mujeres artistas en la Colección Los Bragales*, Fundación Vital, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain
2021 *Estampa Contermporary Art Fair*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2021 *Unfair Weather*, Lychee One Gallery, London, UK
2021 *Studiolo*, Una mirada a la colección de Candela Álvarez
2021 *Soldevilla*, Lázaro Galdiano Museum, Madrid, Spain
2020 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Smac Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2020 *Pintura en las venas*, Museo Barjola. Gijón, Asturias, Spain*
2020 *A show of solidarity*, Smac Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2020 X Contemporary Art Fair Oviedo, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Asturias, Spain
2020 *Las calles de los artistas*, Noche Blanca Oviedo, Asturias, Spain
2019 *The female line*, Smac Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2019 FNB Art Joburg, International Art Fair, Smac Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
2019 *Las formas del alma*, Instituto Cervantes, Roma, Italy*
2019 Justmad Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2019 *Valhalla*, Gallery Weekend Berlin, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Berlin, Germany
2019 *Open Studio Festival*, La Puerta Cuatro, Madrid, Spain
2019 *Las formas del alma*, Instituto Cervantes, Belgrade, Serbia*
2019 *Las formas del alma*, Instituto Cervantes, Bucarest, Romania*
2019 *Sobre mujeres artistas*, Colegio de arquitectos, Oviedo, Spain
2019 *Viaje al manicomio*, Galería La casa amarilla, Zaragoza, Spain
2018 *Las formas del alma*, Instituto Cervantes, Prague, Czech Republic*
2018 JustLX Lisboa Contemporary Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Lisbon, Portugal
2018 *Nepotismo ilustrado 2*, Centro Cultural de La Carolina, Jaén, Spain
2018 *En la hora azul*, La Casa Amarilla Gallery, Zaragoza, Spain
2018 *Las formas del alma*, Instituto Cervantes, Palermo and Rome, Italy*
2017 *Las formas del alma*, Instituto Cervantes. Madrid, Spain
2017 *Sense 4*, Humanese, Medellín, Colombia
2016 *Rehabitar el espacio: presente, pasado y future*, DKV Collection. Lázaro Galdiano Museum, Madrid, Spain
2016 *Animalista, Representación, violencias y respuestas*, La casa encendida, Madrid, Spain
2016 *Art on a postcard*, Secret Auction for the Hepatitis C Trust, Maddox Gallery, London, UK
2016 *Miscelánea*, VALEY Centro Cultural de Castrillón, Asturias, Spain
2016 BravinLee Programs, New York, US
2016 Museo Thyssen Bornemisza, Madrid. Spain
2015 ESTAMPA Contemporary Art Fair. Espacio Líquido Gallery. Madrid.
2015 *Mirar en un espejo. 25 Years of Young Art in Asturias*, Banco Sabadell Herrero Showroom, Oviedo, VALEY Centro Cultural de Castrillón and Centro de Cultura Antiguo Instituto de Gijón. Asturias, Spain*
2015 *El bosque interior*, Las formas del Alma, Juana Francés Gallery, Zaragoza. Spain*
2015 *Videos domésticos de Artistas*, DA2, Salamanca, Spain
2015 *Sutiles y convulsas ensoñaciones*, César Monzonís Collection, Fine Arts Museum Castellón de la Plana, Castellón, Spain
2014 *100 painters of tomorrow*, Beers Contemporary Gallery, London, UK
2014 *ARCO*. Espacio Líquido Gallery, Madrid, Spain*
2014 *La edad de la Inocencia*, Festival Miradas de Mujeres. Cantabria Central Library, Santander, Spain
2014 *Faro spiritual*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Gijón, Spain
2014 *Utopia Union Ltd*, Utopía Parkway Gallery, Madrid, Spain

Cob.

2013 ARCO. International Art Fair. Espacio Líquido Gallery. Madrid. Spain.
2013 JOBURG Art Fair. Smac Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
2013 *La metamorfosis del paisaje en el Arte*, Caja Vital Foundation, Vitoria. Spain
2013 *Freestyle*, Foundation CajaMurcia, Cartagena*
2012 *Face to Face*, Adam Baumgold Gallery, New York, USA.
2012 *Fiction – Non Fiction*, Adam Baumgold Gallery, New York, USA
2012 ArtBO International Art Fair Bogotá, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Colombia
2012 ARCO International Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2012 11 Biennal Martínez Guerricabeitia, Valencia, Spain
2012 Oviedo Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Oviedo, Spain*
2011 ARCO International Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Madrid
2011 AQUA ART MIAMI Contemporary Art Fair, Triple Base Gallery, Miami, USA
2011 *Contemporary Art from the Fine Arts Museum of Asturias*, Barjola Museum, Gijón, Spain.
2011 *Retrato de Familia*, VALEY Cultural Center of Castrillón, Asturias, Spain*
2011 *Autorretratos*, Nómada Gallery, Gijón, Spain*
2011 SWAB, International Contemporary Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Barcelona, Spain
2010 *Now, it's about what you can't see*, Triple Base Gallery, San Francisco, USA
2010 ARTESANTANDER. XIX International Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Santander, Spain
2010 *La frontera de lo visible*, Utopía Parkway Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2009 PULSE MIAMI Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Miami, USA
2009 International Exhibition of Fine Arts, Valdepeñas, Ciudad Real, Spain
2008 PULSE MIAMI Art Fair, Espacio Líquido, Miami, USA
2008 *Qué arte? Discursos sin fronteras*, Oviedo University, Banco Herrero Showroom, Oviedo, Spain*
2008 *La pintura en los tiempos del Arte. Veinte pintores españoles para el siglo XXI*, Muralla de Baluarte showroom, Congress Palace, Pamplona, Spain*
2008 *Diamond Dogs*, Casado Santapau Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2007 *BigCityUnlimited*, Utopía Parkway Gallery. Madrid. Spain
2007 HOT ART. BALELATINA Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Basel, Switzerland
2007 ARTESANTANDER Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Santander, Spain
2007 *Uno más uno multitude*, Doméstico 09, Madrid, Spain
2007 *Women Painters of Asturias*, Cajastur Showroom, Mieres, Avilés. Gijón, Spain
2007 CIRCA, Puerto Rico International Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Puerto Rico
2007 ARCO Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2007 *Collectif 6BIS*, Galerie Municipale Vitry-sur-Seine, France
2007 *ENTREARTE II*, Revillagigedo Palace, Gijón, Spain*
2007 *Extensiones- Anclajes, I'll be your mirror*, Laboral Foundation, Cudillero, Asturias, Spain*
2007 *Polylogue 1789" Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*. Carré de Baudouin. Paris. France
2006 ARCO International Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2006 IV International Biennale of Fine Arts of Alcorcón, Madrid, Spain*
2006 EXPLUM, Contemporary Art Contest. Puerto Lumbreras, Murcia. Spain*
2006 ARTESANTANDER Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Santander, Spain
2006 *Collectif 6BIS*, Galerie Municipale Vitry-sur-Seine, France
2006 XVIII Painting Biennale City of Zamora, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Zamora, Spain
2006 Salamanca Art Fair 06, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Salamanca, Spain
2006 *Depósito abierto*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Gijón, Spain
2005 *"Becarios Colegio de España en París"*. Cervantes Institute. Paris. France *
2005 ARCO Art Fair. Spanish Minister of Culture Stand, Madrid, Spain
2005 *El fin del paisaje*, Iglesia de la Encarnación y Museo Etnográfico de Castilla y León. Zamora, Spain*
2005 *El hombre Delgado*, Moriarty Gallery, Madrid, Spain*
2004 ARCO Art Fair, Luis Adelantado Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2004 FIAC Art Fair, Luis Adelantado Gallery, Paris, France
2004 *Becarios Colegio de España en París*, Royal Academy of San Fernando, Madrid, Spain*
2004 International Alternative Art Fair, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Köhl, Germany
2004 *Artissima*, Espacio Líquido Gallery, Turin, Italy
2004 *Ziel 1= Kunst = Ziel 1*, Eisenstadt Landesgalerie, Austria
2003 *"Go!" Liquidación total Project*, Madrid, Spain
2003 FIAC International Art Fair. Luis Adelantado Gallery. Paris. France
2003 *V Young Artists' Show*, Luis Adelantado Gallery, Valencia, Spain

Cob.

2003 *Spanish Artists*, Cultural Center of Le Pecq, France
2003 *cm3*, Cité Universitaire Internationale, Paris, France
2002 *Doméstico 01*, Painting Room Project, Madrid. Spain
2002 *European Artists*, Cité des Arts, Paris, France
2001 *Objective 1 Regions*, European Artists. Eisenstadt, Austria
2001 *Lloro porque me da la gana. Love me tender*, Amadís Showroom, Madrid. Spain
2000 *Primavera de Pintura*, FE.VE.SA Showroom, Salamanca, Spain
1999 *1999 Painters*, Convento Showroom, Badajoz, Spain
1998 *SUBTEC, Laser photocopy art*, Columbia Campus (Deutsches Haus) and Taranto Gallery, New York. USA
1998 *Living memory of Asturian art*, CAMCO. Center of Modern Art “Ciudad de Oviedo”, Asturias, Spain
1998 *Fine Arts Exhibition of Castilla y León*, Spain
1998 *Fine Arts exhibition of Asturias*, Spain
1998 *The beach and its echoes*, Piedras Blancas Cultural House, Asturias, Spain
1997 *Fine Arts Exhibition of Castilla y León*, Spain
1997 *Fine Arts Exhibition of Asturias*, Spain
1997 *The boundaries of painting*, FEVESA Showroom, Salamanca, Spain
1996 Contemporary Art Fair of Porto FAC 96. Spatium Gallery, Portugal
1996 *22 International Artists*, Spatium Gallery, Tavira, Portugal
1996 Tomás Luis de Victoria Contest, Casa de las Conchas, Salamanca, Spain
1996 *24 Hours of Performances, Jack the performer*, University of Fine Arts of Salamanca, with the performance “Le sexe des Arts”, Spain
1995 *A white and pure smile*, FE.VE.SA Showroom, Salamanca, Spain
1994 Fine Arts Exhibition of Asturias, Spain
1994 Tomás Luis de Victoria Contest, Casa de las Conchas, Salamanca, Spain

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

2008 First Prize in VIII Painting Contest of the Government of the Principality of Asturias. Spain
2003 Fellowship given by the Spanish Minister of Culture as an artist-in-residence program at the Colegio de España, Cité Universitaire, Paris, France
2001 Fellowship as an artist-in-residence program at “Workshop with Artists from Objective 1 Regions”. Eisenstadt, Austria
1996 Fellowship as an artist-in-residence program at “International Course of Art”. Spatium Gallery, Tavira, Portugal
1995 Erasmus Fellowship to study at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Amsterdam
1994 First Prize and golden medal in the XXV National Painting Contest of Lueca. Asturias. Spain
Fellowship to attend the National Courses of Artistic Creation at Valdeñas de Jaén. Spain

COLLECTIONS

Fine Arts Museum of Asturias
Spanish Minister of Culture
Government of the Principality of Asturias
Government of Castilla y León
City Council of Castrillón (Asturias).
City Council of Jaén.
City Council of Lueca (Asturias).
Private Collections in Mexico, Germany, South Africa, Colombia, Portugal, USA. France, South Korea and Spain.