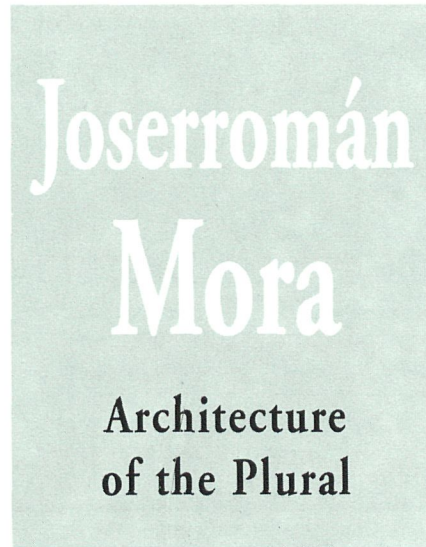


NEXUS

There are many parallels between the personalities of Joserromán Mora and his fellow countryman César Manrique, apart from the obvious differences between them with regards to time, place, experience and production. Manrique was an architect by birth and a painter by trade, and, like fellow Canarian Manolo Millares, was linked to the first Spanish avant-garde movement in the post-war period: and after having consolidated his career in Madrid and



New York, returned to his native Lanzarote, which he transformed into an example of sound ecology, obtaining world-wide recognition for his efforts. Joserromán Mora was also born on a small island, La Gomera, at the periphery of the Canary archipelago, which lies directly on the Greenwich Meridian, and where Columbus dallied on several of his Atlantic crossings. But Mora's career as a professional architect, painter and designer has taken place

entirely on these islands, and more specifically, on Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, which Manrique despised. Both entered the world of design and decoration, as well as public works, gardens balconies, sculpture, etceteras. Even the painting of the two artists is similar in their treatment and investigation of materials, in the roughness of the surface, their abstraction, their intuitive origination and their compositional discipline, in

their natural reference to the landscape, and in many other peculiarities. In any case, Manrique was a star which emitted its own light in the desert, while Joserromán enjoyed the support of his contemporaries on many occasions, and was promoted by several art galleries that commissioned works and helped to manage his career (galleries in Las Palmas which were helpful to many artists in the 1970s, although some of them have since turned their backs on local artists as they once did to Manrique, Millares and many others who were consequently obliged to emigrate in the face of this lack of comprehension, this pettiness and simple indifference towards culture). Moreover, he was able to find and to create bridges of communication between art and society, during a period of great creative activity, with a shortage of professional means for the dissemination of non-official culture.

Joserromán was not one to take refuge in a group representing a majority trend (which normally lasts about as long as candy at a school gate). Nor did he crouch beneath the umbrella of friendship with Canarian and mainland writers and critics so as to shore up the apparent scaffolding of his unexpressed work. We must address this work in its entirety, with due consideration of the multiplicity of skills and techniques which it so exemplifies.



"East Wind and West Wind," Serie. Mix media.

Even so, both Joserromán's painting and his architecture defy precise definition, because in its very conception, this is a work replete with its own expressive diversity: from the *development of the southern beaches of Gran Canaria*, to his housing development and modernization projects, his hotels, gallery designs, the Press Club, workshops, city buses, discotheques, bars, cultural centers, restaurants and private homes (such as that of Mr. J. Kisanani in Lagos, Nigeria, or that of Mr. Adnam Kashogui on Gran Canaria). Accordingly, what concerns him most, is compulsive work in all social sectors. This kind of work, by its

very nature, cannot possess a popular quality. Just the opposite.

However, his technical and formal elitism has made a positive contribution to the aesthetic definition of his solitary, *adventurous, contradictory and plural* work: a contribution which is lively, sincere and coherent.

Now, following several years of silence, he has completed his most recent work in the Canary Press Club of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, whose showrooms he designed.

However, he has never left the artistic community of the islands, nor has he ever stopped experimenting in his painting. This new work is not –as some

people unfamiliar with his career have suggested– a break with the past, a leap into the void in order to establish a new face, but, on the contrary, a reiterative return to double reading. The latter is noted by García-Alcalde; also, that *Joserromán always involves the viewer*, whether by means of the work's kinetic character –which depends on the movement of the observer– or through the *double-entendre*, with which he evinces links between the public and the private, pornography and censorship, and other themes that he has dealt with in his previous work. His incursion into the abrupt and spectacular landscape of his native island, La Gomera, is new, as is the highly elaborate style of the work which he now offers us. In any event, this is very personal and poetic work, work with great potential for further development through the formal combination of elements which have always characterized his painting, painting which straddles abstraction and structure.

A.Z.



"East Wind and West Wind," Serie. Mix media.