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# Female Artists and the Spanish Pavilion in the International Exhibition in 1937

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# Female Artists and the Spanish Pavilion in the International Exhibition in 1937

## **Abstract / Resumen**

This article aims to elucidate why the majority of Spanish female artists did not participate in the Spanish Pavilion of the International Exhibition in 1937. Only two of them took part in this event. However, there were a lot of female artists in that period. In fact, some artists had a promising career, but it seems that they did not dare to be involved in this exhibition in the Spanish Pavilion. In some cases, the no participation of some female artists could have been a simple coincidence, although it should be pointed out that there could be other reasons related to Spanish society and artists' lives that determined the limited female intervention in this Pavilion.

## **Keywords / Palabras clave**

Spanish Republic, Spanish female artists, Pavilion 1937, art and feminism

## **Cover Page Footnote / Si quiere que su cubierta contenga una nota al pie de página...**

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Nowadays, the Spanish Pavilion of the “International Exhibition of Arts and Techniques in Modern Life”, organized in Paris in 1937, is sufficiently well-known, perhaps because it hosted one of the most internationally exhibited paintings or because its miniature model is located inside the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. The fact is that both, the Pavilion conceived by Luis Lacasa and José Luis Sert and Picasso’s *Guernica*, already enjoy the prestige that belongs to them. Works from the Spanish popular exhibition, such as Julio González’s *La Montserrat*, Calder’s *Fuente de Mercurio (Mercury Fountain)*, Miró’s *El payés catalán en revolución (Catalonian Farmer in Revolution)*, Emiliano Barral’s or Pérez Mateo’s sculptures and, obviously, Josep Renau’s photomontages, can be found in this constructivist space<sup>1</sup>.

However, women’s contribution to this international event has been highly ignored. Therefore, the object of this article is to get to know how Spanish female artists participated in the above mentioned Pavilion. In order to be part of this, though, previous political commitment was required, something the majority of female artists had already shown by means of their activity during the Republic and the Spanish Civil War.

In broad terms, the work that, for example, Maruja Mallo and Pitti Bartolozzi accomplished in the Misiones Pedagógicas (Educational Missions) is rather well-known; the latter with the creation of stages and puppets for children’s plays that were performed in the villages. With the outbreak of the Civil War, this commitment was emphasized and a lot of women affiliated to political associations and unions that emerged. Juana Francisca Rubio, José Bardasano’s<sup>2</sup> wife, joined the Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas (Unified Socialist Youth Movement) where she collaborated by drawing posters; Pitti Bartolozzi, married to Pedro Lozano, got emotionally involved with the Altavoz del Frente (Front Speaker), and the Valencian female artists –Manuela Ballester, partner of Josep Renau, Amparo Muñoz, the artist Manuel Edo Mosquera’s wife, and Elisa Piqueras, who became a relative of Manuela Ballester when she married Joan Renau– got involved in the Valencian organization called Alianza de Intelectuales

Antifascistas por la Defensa de la Cultura (Antifascist Intellectual Alliance for the Defence of Culture) (García 1995).

A wide number of journals where all of the above mentioned female artists participated appeared, in turn, as written expression mechanisms of those and other organizations. For instance, Juana Francisca in the *Boletín del Subcomisariado de Propaganda (Bulletin of Deputy Superintendent of Propaganda)*; Pitti Bartolozzi in the *Crónica* journal (*Chronicle*), Manuela in *Estudios (Studies)* and *Nueva Cultura (New Culture)*; Elisa Piqueras in *Verdad (Truth)* and all the Valencian female artists in the *Pasionaria* journal, related to the Asociación de Mujeres Antifascistas de Valencia (Antifascist Female Association of Valencia), whose editor was Manuela. The *Crónica* journal, in its issue number 382, reports the beginning of this new publication and defines it as a “bella obra cultural”. Furthermore, it quotes Manuela:

Nuestra Revista responde a las necesidades vitales más hondas de la mujer española en los momentos en que nuestra patria se reconstruye afanosamente en medio de los horrores de una cruentísima guerra civil. Nada hemos querido eliminar de sus páginas, en tanto tenga relación con el trabajo, la lucha, las angustias y las esperanzas de la mujer en esta hora. Aspiramos a que todos los problemas que nos incumben queden planteados en la revista con toda claridad, para orientación de las mujeres y para la justa solución de los mismos<sup>3</sup>.

In view of the fact that there was obvious concern on the side of these artists, their lack of involvement in the Pavilion’s exhibition is indeed strange. Especially taking into account the fact that the Pavilion wanted to be considered a “state Pavilion” (Alix 50, Cabañas *Renau* 171), that is, a building that would serve as a propaganda vehicle for the actions and values of the Republic, the grisly Spanish War, the artists’ commitment and the safeguard of their heritage, as well as the suitability of the avant-garde for this political cause. What we know up to this moment is that only two works were selected for this exhibition: *Mujer abrazando a un soldado muerto (Woman hugging a dead soldier)* (1937), a drawing by Juana Francisca, and *Pesadillas infantiles (Children’s Nightmares)* (1937), a series of engravings from Pitti Bartolozzi. It seems that Pitti Bartolozzi did

not take part in the competition, but her engravings were requested. In this way, her daughter says:

En Valencia estaba entonces la Dirección General de Bellas Artes, y el pintor Francisco Mateos que es uno de los coordinadores de la organización de los contenidos del Pabellón Español de la República de la Exposición de Artes y Técnicas de París del año 1937 y otras exposiciones que se hacen en Barcelona, le pide que prepare unas obras. Él mismo le enseña la técnica del grabado. Pitti mandará la serie de seis grabados al aguafuerte titulada *Pesadillas infantiles* y algunos dibujos. Fueron muchos los pintores, dibujantes, grabadores, escultores convocados para estas exposiciones (Lozano, M. 304-305).

Firstly, the drawing from Juana Francisca depicts a woman with a deceased soldier in her arms. Its painstaking realism draws our attention to a kind of passive woman who suffers from deaths and whose image serves to raise consciousness in foreign countries. According to Beatriz de las Heras, this representation of passive women was especially frequent since 1937, when the image that our country wanted to send abroad was one of devastation and, therefore, of dire need of evacuation and aid to the Spanish Republic (178-179).

On the other hand, *Pesadillas infantiles* (1937) bears a surrealist style in line with Ramón Puyol and Francisco Mateos' own style, consisting of six engravings with child-like characteristics that connect with part of their previous works like *Pepín, la Vaca Pepa y Azulina* or *Canito y su gata Peladilla* (Lozano, P. 216-219). These engravings represent the “Guerra” (“War”), the “Aviación Negra” (“Black Air Force”), “El Nuevo dragon” (“The new dragon”), “Pesadilla” (“Nightmare”), “Gas” and “El ogro” (“The ogre”) through monstrous beings related to the Spanish situation and that not only served to criticize the war agents, but also to warn about their more defenceless victims: children.

The themes of Juana Francisca and Pitti call for evacuation and intend to raise awareness of the suffering of the civil population. Both of them address aspects that women in war times should focus on, such as children and love towards one another, be it their husband, brother,

father or son. These traditionally female roles are stressed by the Civil War, usually by attributing the rearguard tasks to women.

There is no evidence of more female presence inside the Pavilion through other means. It could be argued that the publishing house and the Pavilion's library would help to put the spotlight on other women. Some illustration albums were published for sale, as was the case of *Recuerdo de España (Memory of Spain)* (1937), where Juana Francisca participated (Cabañas Renau 205-206). This was one of the albums done as result of the agreements of the Comisión Interministerial (Interministerial Commission), which devoted money to the publishing of books and pamphlets. These ones would be sold in the Spanish Pavilion and the procedure was executed by Cámara Oficial del Libro (Official Book Chamber) in Madrid. The drawings were published by Seix Barral and were accompanied by writings of the Sindicato de Profesionales de las Bellas Artes (Professional Union of Fine Arts) in Valencia. Cañavate, Miciano or Servando del Pilar also participated, together with Juana Francisca Rubio. But, unlike *Recuerdo de España* or *Sueño y mentira de Franco (Franco's Dream and Lie)* (1937), which were sold inside the Pavilion, it is not known whether some of the most important journals already mentioned could have been sold too, like *Nueva Cultura* and *Pasionaria*.

What seems to be clear so far is that only Juana Francisca and Pitti were considered to take part in the Pavilion's exhibition. The question then is how the participating art works were selected and why the rest of the period's outstanding female artists were not with them. The selection for the Pavilion was done in two ways, through invitations and competition, both of them carried out by the corresponding commissions where Renau always participated, since he used to hold the position of Director General de Bellas Artes (General Manager of Fine Arts). Because Josep Renau had been called director of the Dirección General de Bellas Artes (General Management of Fine Arts), he was in charge of forming commissions, besides participating in the majority of them. In April 1937, he took part in the "Comisión que ha de ir a París con cargo

a los créditos concedidos a la Presidencia del Consejo para la Exposición Internacional”, together José Lino Vaamonde, Gregorio Muñoz, Félix Alonso y Emiliano M. Aguilera; and also in May 1937 in the “Comisión Interministerial de la participación de España en la Exposición Internacional de París”, made up by José Prat and Alfredo Bauer. Therefore, Renau’s importance and presence is unavoidable. In Miguel Cabañas’s words:

“Si algo fue especialmente cuidado e impulsado en el exterior por el valenciano y la DGBA, sin esquivar la múltiple realización de gestiones internas y externas (incluyendo, como veremos, las diferentes estancias del director general en París e incluso su directa intervención creativa), eso fue la organización y concurrencia de nuestros artistas y su obra en este Pabellón Español de la Exposición Internacional de París” (*Renau* 171).

This way, the invitations as well as the drawing competition are supervised and controlled by the political and cultural power, in the hands of the male gender.

The invitations were issued by Josep Renau in his trips to Paris, especially the one that took place in December 1936, when he managed to bring Picasso into the fold, but also failed to reach an agreement with Dalí (Cabañas “Dalí”). The intention was to get the support from both internationally recognized Spanish artists settled in Paris. But whereas artists such as Miró were selected, women artists were omitted. Apparently, no invitation was given to the female artists of the period. The “modern” women artists of Madrid were, with the exception of Pitti Bartolozzi and Juana Francisca Rubio, ignored in the Section of Plastic Arts in the Pavilion.

The fact is that Maruja Mallo was not in Paris when Josep Renau went to extend the invitations. Mallo was in Vigo, where she had moved to teach at the School of Arts and Crafts as part of the Misiones Pedagógicas and from where she would move to Portugal, thus running away from the Falangists and the atrocities that were being committed against the Republican population of Vigo and Tui. Because of her commitment to the Republic and her relationship with Fernández “Mezquita”, Mallo left Spain and arrived in Buenos Aires in February 1937 from

Portugal (Mangini 197-207). Nevertheless, her sudden move should not have constituted a sufficient reason not to ask for one of her works, since Mallo was already an internationally recognized artist and had a strict commitment to the Republic. In 1936, Maruja Mallo participated in important exhibitions, some of which were international, such as the *Exposición Logicofobista (Logicophobist Exhibition)* (Barcelona) where she presented her work *Cloacas y Campanarios (Drains and Bell Towers)*; *L'Art espagnol contemporain* (Paris), which she attended to present her *Verbenas (Open-air dances)*, and *Mostra Spagnola (XX Biennale International Art Exhibition in Venice)* with the painting *El Espantapeces (The fish scarer)*. The Maruja Mallo Catalogue collects a testimony by Francisco Ayala, who said in 1929:

El nombre de Maruja Mallo –en actual proceso de difusión por trompetas de ángeles y estilográficas de escritores- está destinado a crecer en progresión geométrica. Los que asistimos al nacimiento artístico de tan poderosa personalidad debemos ensayar una oda feliz –y patriótica-: no parece que España haya de abandonar su primer puesto en la jerarquía mundial de la pintura. Por lo pronto –y tan pronto- podemos colocar en adjetivo incomparable junto al nombre auroral de Maruja, invocado ya en múltiples anunciaciones (86).

The catalogue also collects, about the series *Cloacas y campanarios*, a statement by Benjamín Jarnés:

Con su pintura se ve al hombre como por los rayos equis. Así sabemos qué profundos morbos lo corroen, qué piedra fatal va a destruirlo. Se ve al hombre hecho ceniza en pie, hecho química ambulante, sostén de mundos ilusorios. Según es. Pero –así ocurre frente a los espectáculos más desnudos de la muerte- ante estos cuadros de Maruja Mallo se siente más vivamente el afán de vivir. Ya no son escenas junto a la muerte, sino en medio de la muerte, sumergido todo en ella, impregnado todo del pánico ante la nada que ya nos enfría los pies, que lucha con la alta calentura nuestra [...] (89).

In those years, Mallo had also already accomplished the first of her murals, *Sorpresa del trigo (Surprise of wheat)* (1936), of the series that she would finish in Latin America, under the title *La religión del trabajo (The religion of work)* (1936-1939). The suitability in the topic of this canvas could



have included her in the Pavilion, had it not been for the fact that the artist fled to Argentina with it. Agricultural and fishing tasks were not an unexplored issue for Mallo. Her ceramic plates, which were destroyed during the Civil War, and the sketches of the said plates are some of the precedents of these paintings and could have been included in the folk art section of the Pavilion.

Remedios Varo was not, either, in the right place at the right time. She was in Barcelona in 1936, when she also participated in the *Exposició Logicofobista* with several works like *Lliçons de Costura* (*Sewing Lessons*), *Accidentalitat de la dona-violència* (*Accident of woman-violence*) and *La cama alliberadora de les amibes gegants* (*The leg which releases enormous amoebas*) (Varo 48). Nevertheless, she was present not only in Barcelona, but also in Madrid. Remedios Varo was present in the artistic Madrid scene through an exhibition about drawings, together with José Luis Florit. In that year, 1935, she had visited Paris for a short term and she went back there in spring 1937, after Renau's famous first visit. The artist fled from the Spanish war disasters and settled with the poet Benjamin Péret, who had been committed to the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (Labour Marxist Unification Party) since his arrival in Spain in August 1936 (Kaplan *Viajes* 45-55). Being in Paris, she helped Spanish refugees who had problems in France; one of them was his first husband, Gerardo Lizarraga. However, although Remedios Varo's thoughts were in line with the principles of the Republic, her objective was focused on researching the Surrealism and being included in this group to learn from all the participants, be it in Barcelona or in Paris (Mendoza 29). Because of that, her work is not totally politicized and only some *cadavre exquis* and her painting *L'agent double* (*The double agent*) (1936) could be treated as politicized. In this last painting, the insecurity and dangerous environment of those years in Spain is present (Kaplan "Remedios"). Sadly, as happened with Mallo, *L'agent double* was not selected for the exhibition in the Pavilion, even though it was proper in style and thematic and it came from an international and relevant artist.

With regard to Manuela Ballester, her artistic career began perhaps in 1928, when the *Blanco y Negro* (*White and Black*) journal took one of her drawings under consideration for its poster competition<sup>4</sup>. Afterwards, in 1929, she collaborated with this journal and with others like *Crónica* or *El hogar y la moda* (*Home and Fashion*) and she won the third award in “El concurso de carteles de su Obra Maternal” (“The posters competition of your Maternal Work”) of Caja de Pensiones para la Vejez y Ahorros<sup>5</sup>. Her activity increased one year later, when she got the prize for *Babbit* novel’s cover, staying in front of Penagos; when she began to collaborate making photomontages for the journals *Estudios* and *Orto*, and when she awakened the interest of the critics. *La Semana Gráfica* (*The Graphic Week*) said: “Esta dulce y bella Manolita Ballester, aventajada discípula de Bellas Artes, cuyo nombre suena en el mundo del arte por primera vez pregonado por los clarines del éxito”. Thenceforward, her artistic career joined her political interest and she enrolled in the Partido Comunista de España (Spanish Communist Party) in 1931, besides Unión de Escritores y Artistas Proletarios (Proletarian Writers and Artists Union) in 1932. That would be an important year for Manuela Ballester, because she got married to Josep Renau and she exhibited in the Manifestacion de Arte Novecentista (Novecentist Art Manifestation) in Ateneo Mercantil de Valencia. But one of her most relevant achievements is the creation of a poster called *¡Votad al Frente Popular!* (*Vote for Popular Front!*) for the elections of 1936, depicting a woman with a child in her arms and a vote in her hands running away from the repressive sectors of society and going toward the Frente Popular, which would bring bread to Spanish homes.

But Manuela Ballester’s participation in the Pavilion is not clear. Although she had had an impact on the artistic and political context, it seems she did not provide any work as an individual artist. There are some pieces of information that could be misleading. In an article published in the *ABC* newspaper in 1991, the recovery of Valencian artworks for the Spanish Pavilion<sup>6</sup> is mentioned. The name of Manuela Ballester appears among others, but having in

mind that Manuela worked in the artists' team for the Alianza de Intelectuales, together with her brother Tónico Ballester, the author could be her brother. Armando Ramón, in a testimony, explains how this team might create an artistic project about the Civil War in order to be brought to the Spanish Pavilion (785-789). Nevertheless, another text suggests a different function for Manuela, indicating that she helped with organizing the Pavilion (Escrivá 170). In this case, she would have worked together with her husband and it could be presupposed that she would have also chosen artists. But none of these pieces of information are exhaustive so, right now, it is very difficult to distinguish which was the function that Manuela Ballester executed. What is true is that, in 1937, Manuela already had a three year-old child and a newborn girl. Obviously, she was too busy to devote herself to so many things, since she also fulfilled the responsibility of managing the journal *Pasionaria*.

Additionally, there is no in-depth knowledge about the female artists who could have taken part in the national competition announced in Madrid and Valencia, whose basis requested works with a high artistic value and facilitated the necessary money for materials. Having said that, the question expands beyond the mere knowing the participants' names and, bearing in mind that not a great number of women enrolled in for the competition, there is still the question of why did not they, at least, try to enrol.

The answer to this question could be found in Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence. According to the author, this is an unconscious and involuntary assimilation, assumed by the society through social structures and activities based on power relationships which, at the same time, are based on a sexual division of productive and reproductive, biological and social work (49). This violence has an effect on "schemes of perception, appreciation and action" and is settled inside bodies, in the most intimate part of each one, especially affecting kinship:

Esto se ve de manera especial en el caso de las relaciones de parentesco y de todas las relaciones concebidas de acuerdo con ese modelo, en las que esas inclinaciones duraderas del cuerpo socializado se

explican y se viven en la lógica del sentimiento (amor filial, fraternal, etc.) o del deber que, a menudo confundidos con el respeto y la entrega afectiva, pueden sobrevivir mucho tiempo a la desaparición de sus condiciones sociales de producción (Bourdieu 55).

Therefore, this symbolic violence existing in all Mediterranean societies –according to Bourdieu (18) – could also be found in the context of the Spanish Republic, where a new type of kinship appeared in the first years of the twentieth century: the *companionate marriage*. This kind of marriage had been disseminated in England and the United States –with its pertinent polemic– through some texts and articles written by the judge Ben B. Lindsey who, besides promoting sexual intimacy and the freedom and privacy of young couples, advocated equality in marriage (Simmons 108). And the thing is, in the thirties’ Spain, like in the English-speaking context, modernity was taking place. It was a modernity that influenced relationships and this affected the relations between marriage and citizenship. In this way, “an increasingly settled nation with more numerous and developed institutions needed marriage less as a means of governance or as a symbol of republican political virtue, as it had been from the colonial era into the nineteenth century” (Simmons 110-111).

Without the slightest doubt, the Spanish Republic facilitated the companionate marriage that, at the same time, contributed to power and place reformulation of women related to the public space. All these aspects promoted female access to work and, in consequence, to training and education. However, theory was not put into practice completely and, although the number of librarians, archivists and female university students increased, motherhood continued to be seen as an essential goal in women’s lives. In Christina Simmon’s words, “the new ideas were being propounded in a world where pressures and incentives toward motherhood remained powerful” (123). The same idea was transmitted by María Lejárraga –Martínez-, who in her speeches given in Madrid’s Ateneo in 1931 said: “Dar la vida, amparar lo que nace, proteger lo

que crece, cuidar la flor y defender el fruto... Esa es nuestra misión, mujeres; y afortunadamente, en eso consiste nuestra felicidad. Todas tenemos nuestro hijo, puesto que todas hacemos algo en el mundo; y obra que realizan manos de mujer es, sin que ella lo pueda evitar, obra de madre” (Martínez, M. 129).

The Spanish female artists of this period belonged, therefore, to this modernity where the companionate marriage was practised, although always with limitations. The majority of them, excepting Maruja Mallo who never got married, could be classified inside some kind of the companionate marriages that Simmons marks. Remedios Varo, for example, could be identified with a specific modern marriage in which the most important thing was love and where sexual relationships came as a result of it. Moreover, given her different relationships –finished or not in marriage– with Gerardo Lizarraga, Esteban Francés, Benjamin Péret and Walter Gruen, her conception of marriage could be called, according to Havelock Ellis –collected by Rebecca L. Davis–, as trial marriage, characterized by ending of marriage when love finished (1143). Obviously, in those years in Spain this kind of marriage did not receive any specific name, but it was known by intellectuals of this period like Gregorio Martínez Sierra, who in *Nuevas cartas a las mujeres* advocated for an equality in marriage and defended that “roto el lazo esencial, rota la unión. Desatado el nudo de amor, desatado el vínculo de coexistencia” (128).

However, the most common modern marriage was the flapper marriage. Women like Manuela Ballester, Juana Francisca Rubio, Pitti Bartolozzi, Elvira Gascón or Amparo Muñoz Montoro could be assigned to it. All of them were interested in art as a profession, they were married –or got married later– with male artists, and they had some relationship with the main artists in that moment in Spain. In that way, although the flapper woman makes reference to other characteristics, too, these female artists can be considered as flapper. This condition is the symbol of the identity of the flapper marriage (Simmons 149), which entailed controversial situations, specially related to employment. The flapper marriage was supposed to be an equality

opportunity for women in the economic world, but in fact this only happened in the premarital period – the marriage itself and childbearing being the obstacles.

So, in spite of society's efforts for getting equality between men and women and the same access to the public area, the symbolic violence made sure that these marriages did not crystallise in complete equity, women always remaining one step back with regard to male activity. The Spanish society needed not only reforms at a theoretical level, but also a change in attitudes in the society itself. Although there were many campaigns to raise awareness among men and women that this aspect was essential in order for the Republic to be real, there was not “un cambio fundamental en las actitudes generales” (Scanlon 288). Thus, the improvements made during the Republic were used for women to acquire knowledge and liberty, in order to transmit it to their children and give them a better upbringing. Hence, Gregorio Martínez Sierra finished his speech about the future by saying:

En la vida futura, ellas cuidarán la cuna y el fuego con ciencia y conciencia, ellas harán reinar la salud en la tierra; y nosotros, con alegría liberada de la carga tremenda de la responsabilidad no compartida, trabajaremos en hacer la tierra habitable [...]. Y cuando nos juntemos unos y otros para el amor o para el trabajo, no habrá rencores necios de inferior humillada ni desdenes absurdos de tirano ensoberbecido...

¿Les agrada a ustedes, señoras mías, el modesto programa feminista? Pues, en marcha: a la escuela, a la Universidad, al Laboratorio, ¡sobre todo, al Laboratorio! Puesto que de la vida se trata, es menester que ustedes la estudien seria, profunda, concienzudamente, en sus mismas raíces, a fondo y sin pedantería (145-146).

So, in the artistic marriages it was almost impossible to keep two careers at the same time, since it seems that society could not pry women away from domestic labour and motherhood.

What is more, the reasons for this happening are owed to the fact, among other things and according to Bourdieu, that even with optimum social conditions for women this type of violence was buried so deeply inside the bodies that it brought women to self-exclusion. In Bourdieu's words “a través de esa *agorafobia socialmente impuesta* que puede sobrevivir largo tiempo

a la abolición de las prohibiciones más visibles y que conduce a las mujeres a excluirse voluntariamente del ágora” (56). Bourdieu defines this as an unconscious and necessary willfulness since “el poder simbólico no puede ejercerse sin la contribución de los que lo soportan porque lo construyen como tal” (56). In this point, Judith Butler thinks about how power is given rise and she questions whether it is the subject who causes it or vice versa. In her book, *Mecanismos psíquicos del poder. Teorías sobre la sujeción*, Butler tries to explain the term *subjection*, which means submission but is also referred to the process of becoming a subject, through the revision of Hegel, Freud and Foucault’s theories. This concept of subjection is used to clarify that power is not only external, it also forms the subject and, in that course, power is internalized. Thus, a dependency emerges between subject and power turning into an instrument of subjection and submission into an essential element for the formation of the subject itself.

The concept of subjection explains that Spanish female artists did not dare to take part in the Pavilion. According to Butler’s argument, Spanish female artists were formed as subjects in a complex cultural context, since in spite of reforms and intentions of the Spanish Republic, cultural traditions related to gender continued existing. These traditions, as a form of power, were assumed by female artists in the subject formation process, who generally subordinated themselves to them.

Additionally, this subjection creates, at the same time and through a system of relations, a desire, that in the case of Spanish female artists could be art. But for the fulfilment of this desire, the subject must feel threatened as a subject. Referring to female artists, this threat could be the lack of femininity: if I fulfilled my desire of being an artist, I could stop being a woman because I would be defying power through inattention of home and family<sup>7</sup>. Subjection can also be psychological, experienced through conscience. According to Butler, Freud and Nietzsche “explican la fabricación de la conciencia como efecto de una prohibición internalizada [...]” (33). This clarifies that feeling of blame that female artists usually feel when they decide to work in

their careers.

Not only do family relationships show contradictions, but also female activity in the public area does. It is significant that the female sector had such an intense involvement in the actions related to the Republic and the Civil War and, at the same time, did not have a more visible presence in the Spanish Pavilion of Paris where, according to data collected by Josefina Alix, out of ninety-eight artists who participated in the exhibition of the Pavilion, only two of them were women – Juana Francisca and Pitti. The names that Alix collects and their different artists' biographies are worth reviewing. Even though they should be updated today, there are many students from the Escuela de San Carlos, some of whom, like other artists, had no relevant artistic careers, at least not as relevant as the ones the Valencian artists could have, or even the much more recognised Maruja Mallo and Remedios Varo. The explanation resides in that, while the functions women performed in the pre-war and war period derived from more traditional female roles (taking care of soldiers as mothers of humanity, helping their husbands, supporting the Spanish Republic, reporting deserters, etc.)<sup>8</sup>, female insertion in the Pavilion entailed a whole different meaning.

And the thing is that the Pavilion served for its most part as a museum. It was after all a space for works of high artistic value to be exhibited. Works, as in a museum, would contribute to perpetuate the male canon<sup>9</sup>. This was criticised by groups like the Guerrilla Girls who with their action, *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?* (1989), denounced the insufficient attention given to female artists in museums, regarded as power mechanisms in charge of perpetuating art. In this way, the absence of female artists in museums could be understood as a lack of them, since not only they are not visible but neither preserved, in other words “archived” (Alario 21-26), an essential action to rebuild and retell history.

Step by step, female artistic production is being included in several collections and exhibitions of museums, but until very recently it was just an anecdote, as was Pitti Bartolozzi's



and Juana Francisca Rubio's participation in the Spanish Pavilion of Paris in 1937.

The "moderns" of Madrid and revolutionary female artists in general were not made sufficiently visible by the Spanish Republic and the General Management of Fine Arts through that exhibition medium that the Pavilion wanted to be. Thus, Spanish female artists continued suffering male domination, since Spanish society was not prepared to assume the modernity that the Republic meant<sup>10</sup>. This entailed a change in the female role, but it could not happen. Spain, a nation based on essentialisms, constantly experienced this contradiction related to women. Along the twentieth century, left-wing governments supported progress for women but this was always confronted with the idea of Spanishness. It was supposed that this type of woman, for whom the most important things are motherhood and the house, constituted part of this notion and, in consequence, modernity was seen as a threat for the old idea of Spain, whose identity was unsteady from "the disaster of 1898" (Capdevila 14). The contradictions produced in this period were also present in Spanish female artists who, despite their involvements in Republican activities and propaganda, were required to support organization or secondary tasks, in the Pavilion's library or canteen for example, instead of daring to take part in the competition or being invited as artists in the exhibition.

The subjection implicit in the Spanish culture and society that did not know to change its attitudes is noticed in the Spanish Pavilion of the International Exhibition of 1937. Nevertheless, this fact constitutes only an example, since the concepts of subjection or symbolic violence could explain other aspects of women's lives, whether artists or not. In other words, the Republic, in spite of all its efforts, did not get to relieve the power relationships that both men and women were victims of and still nowadays continue to be.

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<sup>1</sup> The first studies about the Pavilion were done by Martín, Fernando. *El pabellón español en la Exposición Universal de París en 1937*. Sevilla: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1982. Print; Alix, Josefina. *Pabellón Español. Exposición Internacional de París 1937*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura-MNCARS, 1987. Print, and Cabañas, Miguel. *Josep Renau. Arte y Propaganda en Guerra*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura-CSIC, 2007. Print.

<sup>2</sup> José Bardasano (1910-1979) was one of the most politically committed artists. He did a lot of posters for the Socialist United Young People and created *La Gallofa*, a propaganda atelier. For more information on this artist see Peña, Carolina, curator. *Bardasano en guerra*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2011. Print.

<sup>3</sup> *Crónica*. n° 382. Year 9. 7 Feb.1937: 9. Print.

<sup>4</sup> *Blanco y Negro*. 30 Dec. 1928: 188. Print.

<sup>5</sup> *La Vanguardia*. 15 Jan. 1929: 7. Print.

<sup>6</sup> “Barcelona devuelve las obras valencianas de la Exposición de París”. *ABC*. 23 Mar. 1991: 51. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Gregorio Martínez Sierra mentioned this term in his *Cartas nuevas*, where he identified subjection with women’s lives inside the domestic area; Martínez Sierra, *Cartas nuevas*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on women’s roles during the Spanish Civil War see Nash, Mary. *Rojas. Las mujeres republicanas en la Guerra Civil*. Madrid: Taurus, 1999. Print.

<sup>9</sup> For a more comprehensive understanding of what the male canon has meant for artists, see Griselda Pollock, “Diferenciando: el encuentro del feminismo con el canon”, in Karen Cordero and Inda Sáenz (comp.), *Crítica feminista en la teoría e historia del arte*, México, Universidad Iberoamericana/UNAM/CONACULTA-FONCA, 2007, pp. 141-159. Print.

<sup>10</sup> With respect to the relationship between women and modernity in a worldwide context, it is advisable to consult Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity*. United States: Harvard, 1995. Print.

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