

Guillermo Mora

The Way Back

28 January–18 March 2023

"I remember how some of my professors at the Facultad de Bellas Artes in Madrid used to say that brushes caked in dried paint could keep painting. They insisted that those bristles, no matter how dry and brittle, still had the ability to produce a "gesture". I liked thinking about how those tools, through use and over time, gradually left their virtuous side behind and began to function like little catapults, moving globs of paint from the palette to the canvas. At the same time, the build-up of paint made them their own support, pictorial objects in their own right."

Guillermo Mora

After his 2022 appearance at Sala Alcalá 31 in Madrid with *A Bridge To Stay On*, Guillermo Mora now presents his second solo show at Galería MPA / Moisés Pérez de Albéniz, titled *The Way Back*. In this exhibition, Mora explores the symbolic potential of painting implements beyond their functionality as tools. The artist has devised three new bodies of work in which he "doubles back", retracing the steps taken in recent years to revisit the idea of the pictorial object through a dense, concentrated process that expands in the space of the gallery.

In the series *Camino de vuelta* [The Way Back], from which this show takes its title, paint completely devours brushes from the artist's studio. Coat upon coat of acrylic paint, applied over months, traps and strips them of their original function. They are pieces on a more human scale, compact, physical, visceral even: utilitarian objects which, in their metamorphosis, come to resemble almost lifelike organisms.

Upon entering the second room we encounter *Salto y gota* [Skip and Drop], a series comprising three constellations of tiny pieces which are actually steel brackets covered in multiple coats of paint. The steel bracket, an element closely related to the wall, used to anchor stretcher bars and secure paintings, is in this case the support surface of the paint itself, which adheres to the bracket's tip and pulls away from the wall. Its soft, liquid, organic appearance contrasts with the straight industrial lines of the metal. Three paintings, atomised in droplets, representing three fundamental pillars of the artist's work: the idea of broken painting, the idea of a painting that shatters and spills, and the idea of a painting that gazes back at us.

Finally, on the staircase we find *Giro de cabeza* [Head Turn], consisting of spilt, squashed paint blobs spreading over a board like a painter's palette: the palette recalls the idea of the workshop and the artist's labour in the studio but is impossible to paint with, as each messy mass of colour once again engulfs its own tools. The paint returns to the palette through gesture and performativity, devouring its implements and forming a border line, a frontier that marks the end of some roads and the beginning of others.

The Way Back is a highly personal initiative that speaks of paint as an independent support and essential character for the realisation of Mora's artistic praxis, of a heart that pumps paint.

Guillermo Mora (Alcalá de Henares, 1980) is one of the most nationally and internationally renowned Spanish visual artists of his generation. He was included in Thames & Hudson's *100 Painters of Tomorrow* in 2014, won the Generaciones competition in 2013, and was awarded residencies at the Real Academia de España en Roma in 2010–2011 and ISCP in New York in 2016, among other distinctions. His most important recent exhibitions include *A Bridge To Stay On*, Sala Alcalá 31, Madrid (2022); *A Day with You*, Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (2021); *Horizontal* with Miquel Mont, Tabacalera, Madrid (2019); and *Now, Soon, Then, Tomorrow*, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah (2018). Mora's work can be found in institutions and collections around the world, including Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar; the Margulies Collection at the Warehouse, Miami; Colección de arte contemporáneo "la Caixa", Barcelona; CA2M, Madrid; and Colección DKV.