

## ÁNGEL ALONSO

(Laredo 1923 - Paris 1994)

Michel Soskine is pleased to present during Apertura Madrid Gallery Weekend 2022 its third exhibition of **Ángel Alonso** (*Laredo 1923 - Paris 1994*).

This exhibition is a tribute to the upcoming centenary anniversary of the birth of this unique artist.

Exiled in France since 1947, a man of strong character and forceful painting, inseparable friend of the great poet and philosopher **María Zambrano**, Alonso had somewhat been forgotten from the history of Spanish art. Twenty eight years after the artist's death in Paris, his work reappears with all its strength and radicalism. In the words of art historian and philosopher **Francisco Jarauta**, "Alonso masters the material and technique that he has given himself and with which he manages to embody the colors that most obsess him".



*Ángel Alonso; Laredo 1923- Paris 1994, Michel Soskine Inc. gallery.*

The current exhibition, is a display of 15 selected works from the 60's to the 90's, years in which the work reached its peak. After a period in which **Ángel Alonso** worked mostly in black and white -with series such as "Desastres", he returned to color "which gave rise to some powerful canvases in green, yellow, orange and white", wrote historian and art critic Juan Carlos Marset.

In the exhibition first room, large black and white works from the "The Disasters" series can be seen, and in the adjacent one, color, material such as straw, earth, wood together with works on paper are the protagonist.

**Ángel Alonso**, a self-made artist, had studied ancient painting treaties and created his own paint by mixing natural pigments, either black and white or colored ones, with charcoal, marble powder and his own paint binder. Instead of using a paintbrush, he also handcrafted a kind of large wooden trowel or stick which he used to spread the paint all over the wooden panel, controlling its thickness and border limits. This radical way of physically being engaged in "painting" an abstract work can be seen in a vintage film by Philippe Dufour on Youtube where Alonso in his studio, speaks in French, with his rather strong Spanish accent and heavy smoker voice, the artistic struggle within himself, his demons and radical thoughts about Art.

In Alonso's latest painting, texture is brought to the ultimate and layers of color become porous and subtle. The artist continues his constant research on materialness desperately seeking what he called *the essential*.

A man of strong character, temperamental and solitary, Alonso voluntarily stayed away from the art market and even refused in 1952 to exhibit his works at the prestigious Parisian gallery **Jeanne Bucher**. This refusal has kept his work out of the commercial circuit, supporting himself only with the help of a group of French collectors, some quite important.

**Francisco Calvo Serraller**, a former director of the Prado Museum, after visiting Ángel Alonso's first exhibition in Madrid in 2014, convincingly declared "*This artist will remain in the history of Spanish Art*".



Ángel Alonso; *Laredo 1923- Paris 1994*, Michel Soskine Inc. gallery.

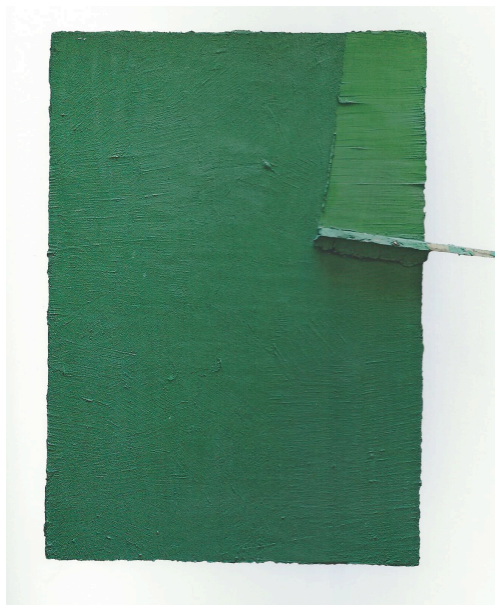
Between 1938 and 1939, **Alonso** was arrested, imprisoned and sentenced to death. His family filed a petition for pardon which was accepted and he returned home, but a few months later he was again arrested for desertion, not having completed his compulsory military service.

He was then deported to the island of Fuerteventura but escaped and, after a period of clandestinely living, managed to cross the French border in 1947. He would never return to Spain.

Once in Paris, the young man joined a group of writers, poets and art critics who were very active at that time. He became very close to **Vieira da Silva, Cioran, Michel Leiris, Pierre Tal-Coat and Nicolas de Staël**, with whom he began to investigate the essence of texture and color.

In 1950 the French authorities threaten to extradite him to Spain, after having been declared a fugitive by Franco: a group led by the poet **Francis Ponge** managed to spare him thanks to a support committee composed, among others, by **Michel Leiris, Henri Calet and Pierre Descargues**. It was at that time that he met **María Zambrano** and struck up a close friendship with her that would unite them for the rest of their lives.

In 1962, Ángel Alonso discovered the landscape of Gennevilliers on the outskirts of Paris, moved there and found an inexhaustible source of inspiration from it. Two decades later, his friend Pierre Tal-Coat lent him his studio in Paris and Alonso alternated between the city and the countryside until due to health problems, he had to leave Gennevilliers and secluded himself in Paris, devoting himself to painting until his very last days.



Ángel Alonso; *Untitled (Green with wood)*, 1993 Mixed media on wood, 163 x 115 cms

Ángel Alonso's exile and his rejection of the market meant that his work was hardly exhibited in Spain until 1996, when the retrospective exhibition *Ángel Alonso (1923-1994)* was held at the **Marcelino Botín Foundation** (Santander, August-September 1996), which then traveled to the **Instituto Cervantes** (Paris, October 1996) and the **Círculo de Bellas Artes** (Madrid, January 1997).

In 2009, the **Spanish Ministry of Culture** acquired a large number of works, while the Ministry of Culture became the depository of his archives (writings, correspondence, documents), with a view to the future creation of a foundation in Cantabria. Between 2013 and 2014, his work was the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at the L'Ar[T]senal museum in Dreux (France).

*"Your painting, Ángel, is your word, which is fulfilled in spite of you, for that you do not take care of it, you leave it like your unique dove to carry the unique message to whoever is waiting for it."*

María Zambrano, February 1989

---

## ÁNGEL ALONSO. Laredo 1923 – Paris 1994

From September 08 to November 05, 2022

**Opening: Thursday, September 8th**

MICHEL SOSKINE INC.  
C/ General Castaños 9. 28004 Madrid  
[www.soskine.com](http://www.soskine.com)  
+34 91 431 06 03  
Tuesday to Friday: 10:30 – 19:30h  
Saturday: 10:30 – 14:30h

For more information contact:  
Greta Garzarán  
[greta.msoskine@gmail.com](mailto:greta.msoskine@gmail.com)

---