



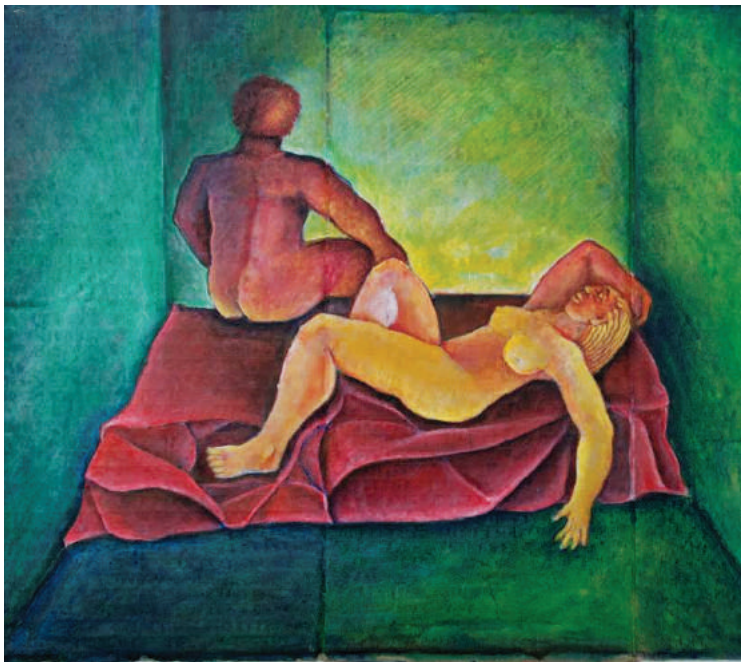
RAWVISION

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PINTURITAS • PERDRIZET • KNOWN-UNKNOWN • OAF DEALERS • MABS FRANCIS



Jose Nava



THE FISHERMAN OF KENTISH TOWN

José Nava - a fish out of water.
The Koppel Project 93 Baker Street,
London W1U 6RL
November 29 2016 – January 20 2017

Having your first solo exhibition aged 79 is a major achievement. More so given the long and winding journey José Nava has been on. Arriving in swinging London in 1961, Nava (born 1937), lived his previous life on the beaches of Acapulco, Mexico. After immersion in the world of experimental theatre company The People Show, and periods of serious mental and physical health problems, Nava has found form in this retrospective show.

Despite a long residency in the UK, his 'cold land', the Mexican beaches and barrios, their flora, fauna and racy action are never far from Nava's work. In the 'shack' he hand-made using reclaimed wood, nestled in Kentish Town, he has recreated a little Mexican oasis, painting compulsively on the themes of his homeland, ocean history and complex family life. His vast collection of work, stacked all over his home and frequently given away, has now been recognised for its important contribution to untrained art in Mexico.

The thoughtfully curated exhibition is like stepping into a Latino household, seemingly an extension of Nava's home. The bright colours in his work are distinctly Mexican and are complemented by exotic fruits, furniture and fishing

ephemera. Alongside the salty topics, Nava's complicated romantic and familial life feature heavily. These include multiple self-portraits and erotic scenes featuring numerous lovers. Nava depicts the human figure with sculptural quality, capturing a base, animalistic essence. More of the fascinating family history is revealed in Zadoc Nava's film about his father: 'Big Fish' (1996). Nava remains an imposing, enigmatic and exotic figure and I await his future creative adventures with interest.

Victoria Tischler

HENRIETTE ZÉPHIR

Collection de l'Art Brut
Lausanne, Switzerland
February 3 – April 30, 2017

Henriette Zéphir (1920-2012) was a French self-taught artist who worked in ink, coloured pencils and watercolour on paper. She claimed that her hand was conducted by an invisible "guide" whose presence at her side she could feel. Still, she did not regard herself as a psychic medium in a conventional sense, but rather as a channel through which artistic energy flowed. Like such other *art brut* makers as Augustin Lesage, Laure Pigeon and Jeanne Tripiier, Zéphir did not claim authorship of her creations but instead attributed them to her "guide".

In the 1960s, the French modern artist Jean Dubuffet, whose pioneering research and collecting led to the establishment of the *art brut* genre, became especially



Henriette Zéphir

interested in works made by artists who claimed to have been guided by spirits. During this period, he acquired a sizeable group of Zéphir's drawings, which later became part of the Collection de l'Art Brut's holdings. This exhibition features works from the museum's collection, along with loans from Zéphir's heirs, allowing for a comprehensive presentation of the evolution of her art.

Organised by the museum's staff curator Anic Zanzi, with assistance from Alain Bouillet, a friend of Zéphir's who knew the artist's work well, the exhibition codifies the main phases of her vibrant art's development, from that of her early, randomly patterned abstractions (which Dubuffet referred to as "guipures", a French word referring to a kind of lace) through the later emergence of her exuberantly coloured compositions with dramatically shaded, organic forms. Whereas the artist's earlier images are often marked by irregularly shaped passages of densely packed patterning, her later compositions open up to feature more limited groupings of simple geometric shapes, including spheres, wave-like curls and serpentine lines. In them, some viewers might find affinities with the bold palette and funky forms that characterise the late American modern artist Elizabeth Murray's paintings of the 1980s or with works by various modernists of the early twentieth century, who sought to express spiritual values through the language of abstraction.

Edward M Gómez