

### SERGIO DE CASTRO

## Exhibition at the gallery - January 2022

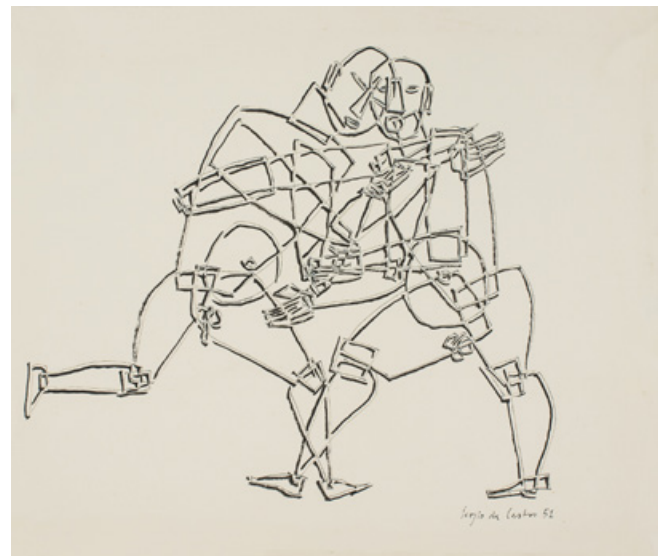
### Chapter 4/4

On this occasion,  
discover Sergio de Castro in 4 chapters.

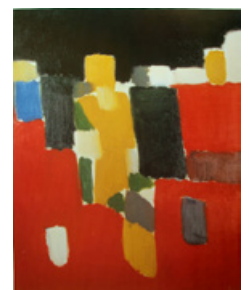
#### FIGURATION

After arriving in Paris in 1949, Sergio de Castro found himself in the midst of an art scene divided by the abstraction/figuration debate. Sergio de Castro chose to take a figurative path by exploring a variety of themes—always, however, using a colourful and poetic style of painting. This independence, this freedom of spirit, was no doubt made possible by Nicolas de Staël, who provided an alternative with his return to figuration. The role of colour was also very important, while the themes addressed were light: music, sports, etc. Denys Sutton confirmed in 1957: “A young painter can now use a figurative style without seeming old-fashioned, backward, or out of step with the norms of the idiom of his time; he is only trying to fashion a new, contemporary idiom. The person primarily responsible for this break with the dogmatism of the abstract school, which allowed painters to adopt this new approach, was Nicolas de Staël: he played the role of mediator between two seemingly irreconcilable positions. Since de Staël’s untimely death, the innovations he introduced have been taken up by several painters of varying talents. The most notable and gifted of these is Sergio de Castro, a young Argentinian painter now living in Paris, who has absorbed in a striking way some of the strengths of de Staël’s contribution without losing any of his own personality; he has completed and upheld the message of his work.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> -Denys Sutton, *Apollo*, n° 394, London, 1957



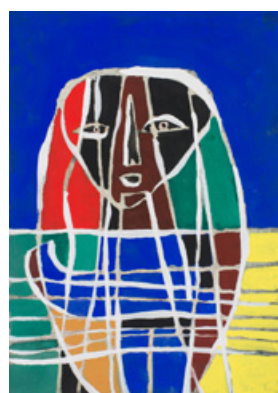
LUCHADORES, 1951  
Ink on paper - 26,5 x 30,5 cm / 10.4 x 12 in.  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



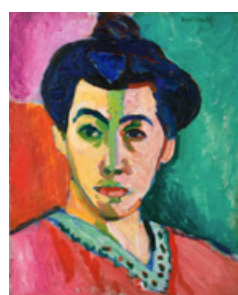
Nicolas DE STAËL  
*Footballeurs*, 1952 - Print - 60 x 80 cm.

Fundamentally figurative, Sergio de Castro was also a portraitist. He depicted his relatives using their faces as a pretext for the expression of colours and lines. In this respect, he is reminiscent of Matisse and Picasso. The art historian André Chastel wrote: "Each one sets the rules of their game at their convenience, considers what they are obsessed with as prodigious, and develops a new temptation. The marvellous, the fantastic and the original abound: as well as ease and credulity. What matters to us, now, is the attempt to contain and gather. It was evident in the work of Nicolas de Staël. With a very different method, and a very Iberian attitude, the same need is manifested in the work of Castro. (...) Castro instinctively joined the small group of painters, like Klee or Vieira da Silva, for whom delight—and the fields it opens up—is indeed 'the end of art', but with a general economy of means and a rather particular mode of formulation." He added: "He has not, therefore, felt challenged by the great contemporary debate on the antinomy of abstract and figurative, object and image. He intends to go forward without making a useless decision; he does not feel that it is necessary. He allows himself all the more willingly to look at the cold structures of Mondrian today, as he did the milky ways of Kandinsky yesterday. He intends not to deprive himself of any assistance."<sup>2</sup>

2 -André Chastel, «Petit portrait de Sergio de Castro», Matthiesen Gallery exhibition catalog, London, 1958



PORTRAIT D'YVETTE QUENOUILLE, 1952  
Gouache on paper - 23 x 16 cm / 9.1 x 6.3 in.  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Henri MATISSE  
*Portrait de Madame Matisse à la raie verte*, 1905  
Oil on canvas – 42,5cm x 32,5 cm.  
Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

Nourished by multiple influences, pictorial and poetic, ancient and modern, Sergio de Castro offers us a very personal body of work. John Russel confirmed: "His is not an airless, classicizing art: it is a classic art, in which passions are none the less tempestuous for the perfected moderation of their expression. It is modern, without being modernistic; original, without ever striving to appear so; serious, but with never a moment of dullness or emphase, and entirely seductive, without ever using that seduction for vapid or ephemeral ends. Altogether I know of no painter of Sergio de Castro's age whose work gives the observer so encouraging an idea, not so much of 'the future of art', as of the future of the artist as a human being."<sup>3</sup>

3 -John Russel, «Sergio de Castro», Goya, n° 46, Madrid, 1960



UNTITLED - 1953  
Gouache on paper laid down on canvas  
44,5 x 36 cm / 17.5 x 14.2 in.  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris