

DIANE DE POLIGNAC

ART COMES TO YOU N°32

SERGIO DE CASTRO

THE SIMPLE THINGS

By Mathilde Gubanski



Table blanche, 1954
Egg-based painting on tinted Canson paper
50 x 65 cm - 19.7 x 25.6 in.
Signed and dated "CASTRO 54" upper left
Galerie Diane de Polignac, Paris

Sergio de Castro was born on 15 September 1922 in Buenos Aires. He was both a composer and a painter. Sergio de Castro was awarded a grant by the French government and settled permanently in Paris in 1949.

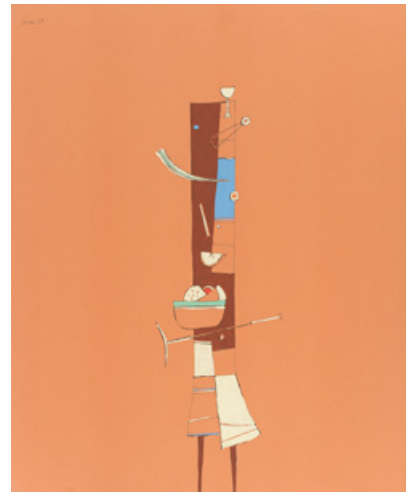
From then on, he retired from his activities as a composer to devote himself to painting and stained-glass work. He was soon exhibited in Parisian galleries: his first solo exhibition took place in 1952 at the Galerie Jeanne Castel, where he presented a collection of still lifes. Sergio de Castro began to use egg tempera, inspired by the Sieneese painters that he had admired on two earlier trips to Italy.

The exhibition *The Simple Things* presents a group of still lifes created between 1952 and 1956: 2 oils on canvas and 25 works on paper painted with gouache or egg tempera. These still lifes are organised into 5 themes: table paintings, chair paintings, constellation paintings, fish paintings and table-column paintings.

The objects in his works are not represented in a realistic way but rather rendered geometric in form, to the extreme. There is no relief, shade or depth. Sergio de Castro fully embraced the flatness of the sheet of paper and rejected the illusion of space. The objects are presented frontally to the viewer on a raised surface to facilitate their viewing.



Constellation bleue, 1954
Egg-based painting on tinted Canson paper
62,5 x 48,5 cm - 24,6 x 19,1 in.
Signed and dated "CASTRO 54" lower left
Galerie Diane de Polignac, Paris



Untitled, 1954
Egg-based painting on tinted Canson paper
61 x 50 cm - 24 x 19,7 in.
Signed and dated "CASTRO 54" upper left
Galerie Diane de Polignac, Paris

These artworks present us with some of the artist's personal items. Through these works, Sergio de Castro has given us a glimpse of his life in the studio. The artist settled permanently in the 14th arrondissement of Paris in 1953, in a studio that was once occupied by Paul Gauguin. Colour played an essential role in the composition of Sergio de Castro's still lifes thanks to his choice of coloured Canson paper. The colour of the paper became the colour of the composition's background, as well as the colour of certain objects defined by their contours alone. As such, the artist explored the idea of fullness and emptiness, the space in reserve playing a role as important as the solid colour planes. The colour in his works is exuberant, becoming light, colour, surface and form all at once.

As Charles Sterling wrote, still life is "that fragment of the world that can be put in order twice, before painting it and while painting it." This is because the arrangement decided by the artist in the observational phase does not correspond to the arrangement that is painted. Floating on a level plane, without any depth, the objects are arranged in a precarious balance between order and disorder. The objects are not immobile but dancing. These are not static compositions as the term "still life" implies.

The objects are like musical notes on a score: Sergio de Castro was a musician before he became a painter and this part of his life profoundly influenced his pictorial work. While the still life genre is often a silent one, Sergio de Castro's works are particularly musical.



Untitled, 1952
Egg-based painting on tinted Canson paper
65 x 91,5 cm - 25,6 x 36 in.
Signed and dated "CASTRO 52" lower right
Galerie Diane de Polignac, Paris