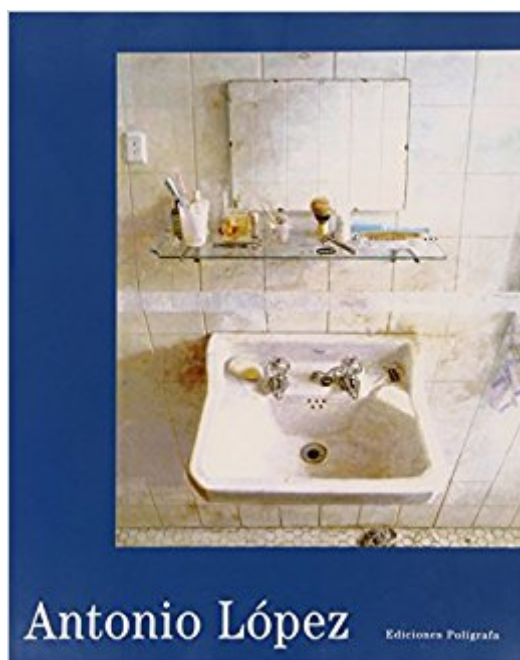


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Antonio LÃ³pez



Synopsis

Contemporary Spanish Realist painter Antonio López García is one of those artists, like Bacon and Balthus, who, in a century dominated by the avant-garde and its legacy, has managed to craft an individualistic style on the margins of prevailing trends. Known for his exquisite explorations of the mundane--starkly lit people, buildings, plants and interiors--he deftly calls attention to these familiar forms, allowing the viewer to pore over their details. Sometimes hyperrealistic, López García has been criticized by many art critics for neoacademism and praised by others, like Robert Hughes, who consider him a master Realist. As López García told Michael Brenson in 1989, "Reality has a highly resonant physical appearance that twentieth-century man perceives from different angles to those distinctive of other ages." The volume includes a text by art historian José M. Faerna.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Once in a while I come across books that I think are the perfect representation of an artist's work. With two thoughtful and informative essays and very high quality printing standards, this one is a beauty. It certainly makes a prime example of the idea that information about visual artists-painters and graphic artists in particular are still most effectively carried through printed text and images. the internet and tablets are great but until any of them match the feel and connection to work of this sort, a book like this remains the best medium.

Although I don't think the images are the best in terms of colour and tone, the written documentation

is of benefit.

The last couple of years have seen resurgence in publishing on the great Spanish artist Antonio Lopez Garcia. For those who care about his work, it has been something of revelation and also seen as righting a publishing wrong. To those in the know, Lopez is rightly seen as among the greatest of realist artists, and although perhaps lesser known, an equal to the other titan of 20th century realism, Lucian Freud. That said, Lopez's bio has been covered in extensive detail in other places, so I'll focus here on how this important exhibition catalogue from the Museo

Thyssen-Bornemisza is different from other recent books like *Paintings & Sculpture, Drawings*, and the MFA Boston's 2008 survey catalogue *Antonio Lopez Garcia*.¹ The Place to Start: The Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza's recent exhibition and catalogue brought together 100 of the artist's important works made throughout his career in all media, and this fact combined with the overall quality and price point, makes this book a fantastic starting point for learning about the artist. The book is organized thematically--Memory, Madrid, Gran Vía, Trees, Nudes, Characters and Interiors, which is a really useful way to contemplate Lopez's accomplishments. Important works like *The Table*, *Gran Vía*, and *View of Madrid from Torres Blancas* are all included, as are less known works like his enormous 2010 sculpture *Woman of Coslada*.² The Exhibition Itself: This 2011 Museo

Thyssen-Bornemisza exhibition was the largest museum exhibition on the artist since the Reina Sofia's show back, which was mounted in 1993. As an aside, the catalogue for that exhibition has been long out of print (barely available in the US at all) and highly sought after by fans of the artist (\$200-\$400 on the secondary market). Lopez and his daughter Maria were heavily involved in the execution of both the book and show, and it is clear that this was done with care and precision. The exhibition was a huge success last summer, and according to news reports drew 320,000 visitors, the most of any temporary exhibit ever hosted by the museum.³ Production quality: This book was produced by the same printer (TF in Madrid, Spain) who has printed the artist's other recent books *Paintings and Sculpture* and *Drawings*, and the quality is just as high as those books. He has a close working relationship with the printer, and it shows in the quality of the reproductions. An especially nice feature here is the wonderful jacket with printed flaps, laying over a wonderful natural colored cloth binding.⁴ . This Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza vs. the MFA Boston survey catalogue: Although this book is more expensive than the MFA Boston catalogue from 2008 (\$60 vs. \$24.95), it is a much better investment in my mind for two main reasons. First, it covers significantly more ground. Second, the reproductions are really 100x better. Although they may look ok at first glance, in comparison with the other books or the actual paintings themselves, many of the MFA repros look

washed out or unbalanced. Don't get me wrong, I do have a soft spot for the MFA book seeing as it was the first US museum show ever, and it was the first substantial book published for many years. But for those people looking to learn about Lopez, there are now many other options available.⁵ This Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza catalogue vs. D.A.P.'s two recent monographs, *Paintings and Sculpture* and *Drawings*: The recent D.A.P. published companion volumes are really wonderful book-objects. They have incredible production quality (paper, printing, binding, jackets, etc.) and the overall scope of these projects make them probably the best overall books on the artists. Together they go deep into the artist's complete oeuvre. Although they are not catalogue raisonnés in the strictest sense, they approach the subjects with an extreme depth. The reproductions are large with tons of details. However, at \$75 each they are an investment. The Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza's catalogue is a smaller book in terms of trim size and not as lushly produced as the other books (lesser weight paper mainly). The reproductions are generally smaller, without many details. That said it is \$15 cheaper, and brings together the best of all three strains of the artist's work together in one volume.

Antonio López García is in the upper echelon of realist painters of his century. Born in 1936 in Spain he has studied and continued to paint in the same vein all his life and his paintings and drawings are cherished by art lovers and art historians alike. His technique is one of direct observation: he can paint a simple object like a vase, a quince, a branch, a building or a cityscape and spend hours of contemplation, negotiating exactly how the subject is influenced and molded by light and by the atmosphere around it. His works would never be considered controversial, a trait that perhaps keeps him from becoming a household word in the art world. That is except for artists: no matter the individual style of his admiring painter colleagues, his attention to subtle detail making the most ordinary object a moment of beauty is a source of inspiration for all. This rather small booklet shares many of his works in every form that he creates. The reproductions are of excellent quality and the essay by Jose M. Faerna adds to the appreciation of the painter's artistry. While this is by no means the definitive volume on this great man of the arts, it is an affordable introduction to the mysteries Antonio López García creates. Grady Harp, December 10

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