

THE CERAMIC MURALS OF THE AP-2 MOTORWAY

Lozano Sancha, A.*

University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU), Bilbao, Spain

In the year 1976, the company “Patronato de Autopistas del Ebro”, organized a competition to produce twelve large format ceramic murals which can be seen at the Service Stations of the AP-2 motorway.

The axis of the theme was the motorway itself, where competitors were invited to represent what the road inspired in them. The Project is historically framed in the epoch of the Spanish Transition (1975-1978) with the intention to modernize, open up internationally, and to develop the country’s infrastructures.

Amongst the selected artists names such as Ángel Garraza, Lluís Castaldo and Arcadio Blasco can be highlighted. Other important artists such as Enric Mestre, Pere Noguera, Madola or Claudi Casanovas were not selected. All of them are essential figures in the world of national and international artistic ceramists in the XX and XXI century.

These works constitute an important artistic group within the category of ceramic murals. However, because of diverse circumstances, currently there are shortcomings in its conservation and its presentation which makes it difficult to understand, interpret and view the artworks. The lack of interest in the murals has resulted in their deterioration due to no maintenance or the incorrect interventions according to the criteria of contemporary conservation.

Despite the fact that the motorway is in constant use, forty years after their creation, we find that this heritage is practically unknown and in danger of destruction. Although many people transit through the area very few stop to look at the murals. And besides the identification of the works is wrong or non-existent and there is little bibliography available, therefore knowledge of this legacy is practically unobtainable.

To conclude this work intends to study, dignify and project this group of murals to ensure its conservation and to make possible its application to other projects of a similar kind. In fact, the issues faced by the AP-2 ceramic murals are common among a large number of XX century outdoor artistic ceramics.

To travel along the AP-2 motorway stopping at these murals is an extremely interesting journey from an artistic point of view. Large formats, esthetic quality, fragmentation and modulation solutions, chromatism, and material strength which speak of the ceramics of the second half of the XX century, but nowadays their messages remain active.



Figure 1. Garraza, A., Blasco, A. and Safont, M. Murals. Three out of the twelve murals set.