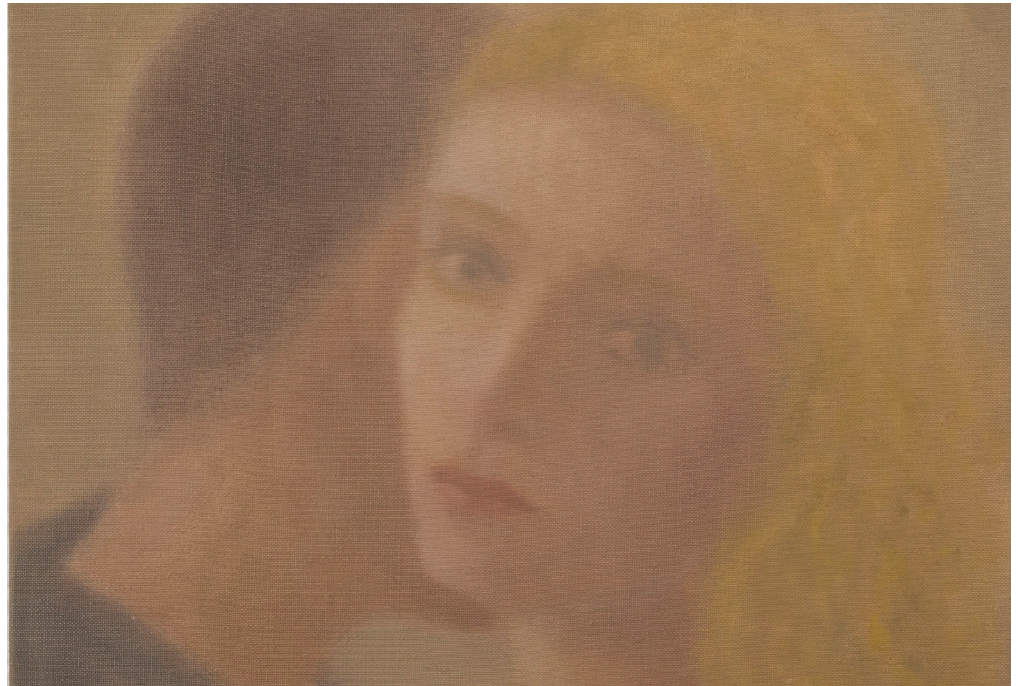


# Chechu Álava

## Water is taught by thirst

16.01.25 → 01.03.25

Press release



Chechu Alava  
*Persona, 2024*  
Oil on linen  
33 x 41 cm

Xippas Geneva

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Tuesday to Friday:  
10am to 1pm and 2pm to 6.30pm  
Saturday: 12pm to 5pm

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**Opening on January 16, from 6 pm to 9pm, on the occasion of La Nuit des Bains.**

Galerie Xippas is delighted to announce Chechu Álava's first solo exhibition in Switzerland, featuring a series of new paintings.

*Water, is taught by thirst.*  
*Land—by the Oceans passed.*  
*Transport—by throe—*  
*Peace—by its battles told—*  
*Love, by Memorial Mold—*  
*Birds, by the Snow.*

Emily Dickinson

Chechu Álava's painting plays with time, codes and boundaries. She makes past, present and future coexist, expressing the legacies of art history with a contemporary brush, as if inhabited by what has already been done. She takes the pictorial path of vagueness to formulate emotions with rare precision, and, by probing the depths of each individual, draws a universal human portrait that links the intimate to the collective narrative. Depicted with the utmost delicacy, the flesh of the bodies reveals the souls that animate them, and their fragile, Balthusian beauty embodies an unsettling strength.

Held up to those who contemplate them like mirrors, the Spanish artist's fascinating paintings are peopled by essentially female figures, whose gaze seems as much to pierce others as to lose themselves in an inner dream. Like matryoshkas, they interweave the artist's personal life, references to the great masters, to personalities who marked their era and to feminism.

These multiple layers are physically reflected on the surface of the canvases. Through a slow process, guided by a modified state of consciousness and something akin to transcendence - "driven by paint", she says - Álava works in oil through transparency. She lets each layer dry before covering it with a new one, giving the material a vaporous fluidity akin to a dream. For Chechu, reality is not a matter of straight lines, but of intuition.

A beautiful painting is "neither a good idea, nor a good technique, nor both at the same time". It is a gesture of love, an inner journey that results from a series of accidents leading from one place to another; it escapes its creator to live its own existence and, like music, allows itself to be interpreted by the vision and sensibility of its viewers.

Borrowing its title from a poem by Emily Dickinson, "Water is taught by thirst", the exhibition presents the artist's six most recent works. Less obviously linked to historical figures, the narrative has taken a more autobiographical turn. The weft, however, remains woven from the threads of sensuality and spirituality, which constantly bring us back to ourselves.

Irène Languin

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Chechu Álava was born in Piedras Blancas, Asturias (Spain) in 1973. She lives and works in Paris.

Chechu Álava has recently had solo exhibitions: in 2023 at Galería Alegría (Barcelona, Spain), in 2022 at Galerie Xippas (Paris, France), at COB Gallery (London, UK) and in 2021 at BravinLee Programs (New York, USA).

In 2020, the Thyssen Bornemisza Museum in Madrid presented her solo exhibition 'Rebeldes', accompanied by the publication of a monograph.

Her work has also been exhibited at the Museu Fundacion Juan March (Palma de Mallorca), the Museo Lazaro Galdiano (Madrid), the Museo Barjola (Gijón, Spain), the Instituto Cervantes (Rome), the Museo de Bellas Artes de Castellón de la Plana (Castellón, Spain), the Carré de Baudouin (Paris) and the Cité des Arts (Paris).

Her work can be found in many important public collections : the Asturias Museum of Fine Arts, the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the Government of Asturias, the DKV Foundation, as well as private collections in various countries: Colombia, Mexico, Germany, Portugal, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, South Africa, China, South Korea and Spain. In 2014, her work was selected by an international jury to be included in the catalogue '100 Painters of Tomorrow', published by Thames and Hudson.