

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 1985

# Weekend

Copyright © 1985 The New York Times

## The New York Times

C22

### Art:

By JOHN RUSSELL

Also of interest this week:

**Five Spanish Artists** (Artists Space, 223 West Broadway): Not for the first time, Artists Space has done us a service by treading ground unexplored by others. Chosen by a young New York artist, Donald Sultan, the five Spanish painters in question were born between 1943 and 1957. Three of them — Miquel Barceló, Miguel Angel Campano and José María Sicilia — now live in Paris, thereby renewing a tradition that dates not only to the youth of Picasso and Juan Gris but way back into the 19th century. The others, Ferrán García Sevilla and Menchu Lamas, still live in Spain but already have their place on the international exhibition circuit. (Menchu Lamas is by the way all the more welcome in this context for being a woman).

As in any well-balanced show that has no particular prejudice behind it, it is difficult to generalize as to the "new spirit in Spanish painting." But it may not be unfair to say that the popular imagination of Galicia is to Menchu Lamas what the landscape of Catalonia was to Miró. Her outsize, emblematic, strongly colored images take hold of our attention at once and hold it as tightly as a cobra, in one of her paintings, is held by a sinewy arm.

Among the painters now based in Paris but well aware of what is being done in West Germany and elsewhere, José María Sicilia has done a particularly good job of what the catalogue calls "re-encountering and de-cobwebbing the old masters." Nor has anyone since Giacometti in his posthumous book of lithographs called "Paris Sans Fin" put so much of Paris into art and at the same time known so well how much to leave out.

But then, the show as a whole makes a very good — and a blessedly unofficial — pitch for the new Spanish painting. (Through May 31.)